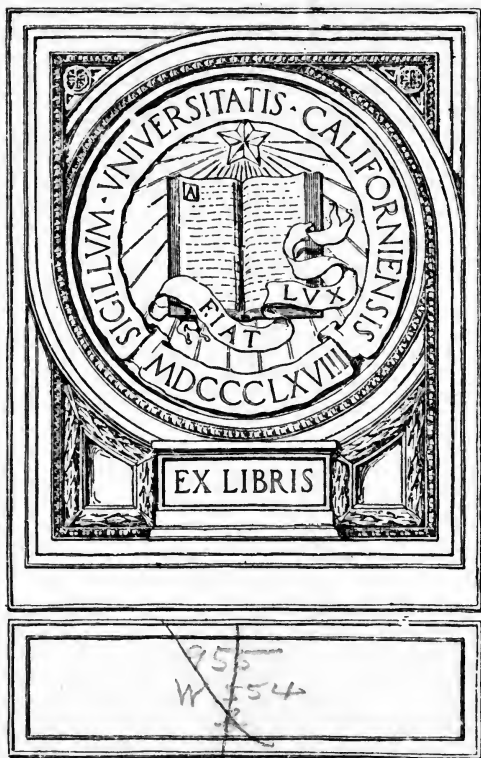




"BOBBO"
AND
OTHER
FANCIES

THOMAS WHARTON



...



Faithfully yours
Thomas Stoughton

"BOBBO"

AND OTHER FANCIES

BY

THOMAS WHARTON

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY OWEN WISTER

ILLUSTRATED



NEW YORK

HARPER & BROTHERS PUBLISHERS

1897

Copyright, 1897, by HARPER & BROTHERS.

All rights reserved.

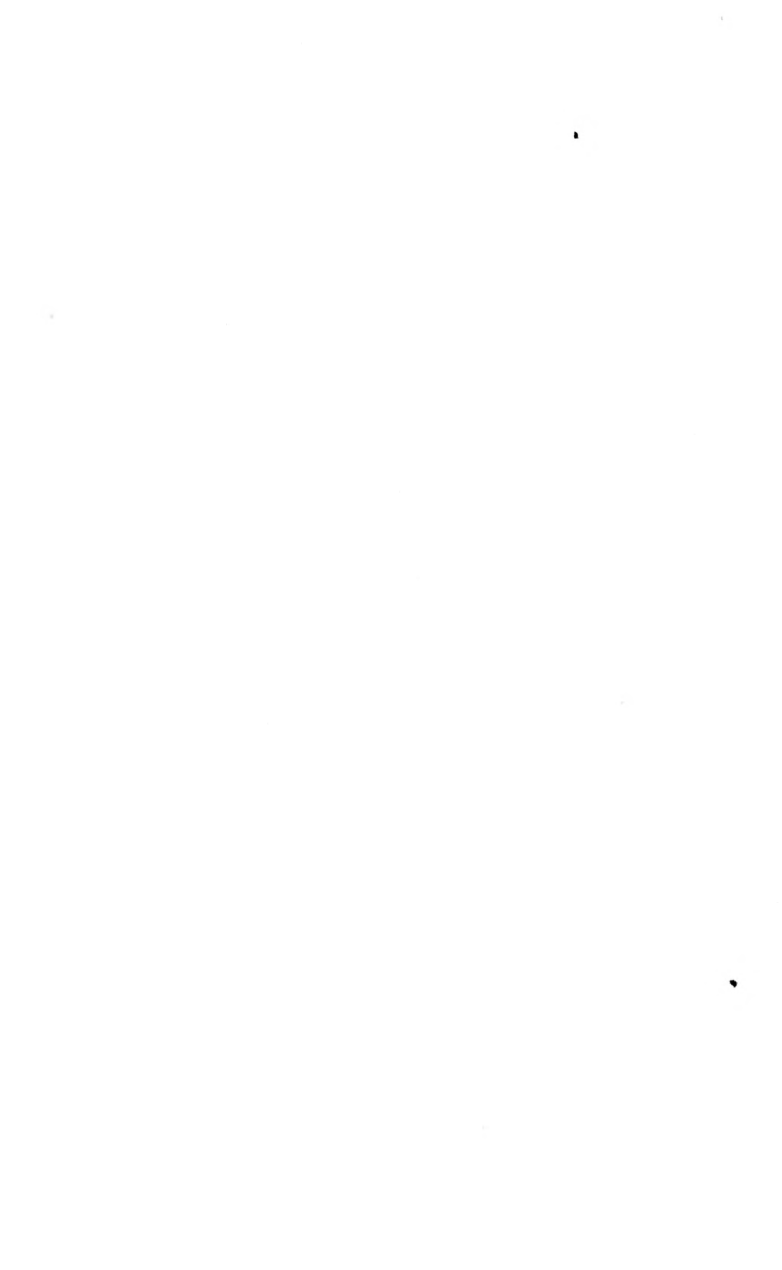
NEW YORK
HARPER & BROTHERS
PUBLISHERS

3164
W43
B63
189
MA

The Publishers of this volume desire to express their thanks to the editors of the *Atlantic Monthly*, of *Puck*, and of the *Philadelphia Times* for their courteous permission to collect here certain pieces which Mr. Wharton contributed to their pages.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
"BOBBO".	I
THE LAST SONNET OF PRINZIVALLE DI CEM-	
BINO.	55
RATU TANITO'S WOOING	95
OLD AND NEW	III
VERSES	125



ILLUSTRATIONS

THOMAS WHARTON.	<i>Frontispiece</i>
ILLUSTRATED HALF-TITLE	<i>p.</i> I
"HE HAD BEEN OUT VERY LATE HIMSELF".	<i>Facing p.</i> 4
"AND EVERY TIME THE PRINCESS SIGHS"	" 8
THE MAGISTRATE	" 10
"AND LOOKED DEVASTATION AT THE MAGISTRATE"	" 14
"PAUL PATUREAU RETURNED TO HIS SENSES"	" 50
THE FIRST MEETING	" 62
IN THE GARDEN	" 84
"SLEW HIM LIKE A TRAITOR"	" 88
"AND THE POOR CHILD BROKE DOWN AND CRIED".	" 94



IN MEMORY OF THOMAS WHARTON

THE first story in this book is almost the last published by its author: it is also the best that he ever wrote. To those who knew him, it is doubly sad that just as his long waiting for success seemed really ended, just as he seemed really to be coming to his own, death should have removed him from the world. He was not young, except in heart—he lived to his thirty-seventh year. His writing, both prose and verse, began in his boyhood, and continued to the latest days with something more than diligence. In the earliest days he had always some new delicate or divert-

IN MEMORY OF THOMAS WHARTON

ing rhymes to impart, some new literary plan in his head, and in the final week of his life it was the same; only then the plan was no longer unsubstantial, but a contract with a prominent London and New York house for a volume. This project itself postponed a collaborated romance, which a leading New York weekly was ready to publish serially when it should be completed. Even the proposed illustrator had been decided upon. Thus the writer's hand was not near, but had laid its first actual hold upon the success towards which he had been groping for many patient, dauntless years.

Thomas Wharton made the usual beginnings of the writer who goes to school and college. His verses were soon taken by the journals of the institutions to which he was sent; and this author's first appearance in print, at

IN MEMORY OF THOMAS WHARTON

fifteen, was (the case has been known to happen before) a translation from the Odes of Horace. It has in Wharton's instance this point: first and last, he was a scholar, an accurate reader, an investigating student, delighting in the world's literature, from Greece to America; possessed of a wholesome catholic taste, because the grain of his mind was civilized by inheritance and acquisition.

The peculiar native thread of his own imagination was slender, but it never broke. For a time, however, it lost itself in the multitude of books which he admired, and Thomas Wharton often wrote under the spell of his favorites before he learned to write like himself, and under his own spell alone. This, and another thing presently to be mentioned, hampered him in his first more serious ventures.

IN MEMORY OF THOMAS WHARTON

From the Horace Ode until, when twenty-four, he attained the *Atlantic Monthly*, his light verses were constant in various more modest columns. He wrote with remarkable ease, and almost always with a certain crisp happiness which distinguished these trifles of his from those of his college literary contemporaries. The undergraduate poet is seldom so precocious at the mere craft of his art.

His college days over, it seemed not only traditional but also necessary that Thomas Wharton should follow the law—indeed, had the choice not faced him from without, it is likely he would have made it readily enough. Yet his was not the proper temperament for success as a modern advocate; besides, too many other things were in his head. In recording the merely mechanical incidents of his career, let it be said once

IN MEMORY OF THOMAS WHARTON

for all that he duly became a member of the Philadelphia bar; that he was later in a Trust Company, searching titles and devising romance; that in the autumn of 1888 he went on the editorial staff of the *Times*, of which he was Sunday editor at the time of his death.

Publishing verse ceased almost entirely when he began his study of the law; but in January, 1884, Thomas Wharton brought out his first novel, *A Latter-day Saint*. It was a satirical narrative, the career of a girl who from a fashionable school for young ladies comes into good society "on the make," to use the briefest expression. For a writer of twenty-five it was better than creditable. Much of it was shrewdly observed, most of it was well said. Though *The Confessions of a Frivolous Girl* preceded it, a comparison of these two clever books will show Wharton's (in spite of

IN MEMORY OF THOMAS WHARTON

some shortcomings which the other has not) to possess the keener and compact-er power. The story is forgotten now ; never was it widely known ; and its expiring upon its own door-step suggests the second obstacle which met Wharton.

When in Boston any fellow-citizen paints a picture or writes a book, he is approached and fostered for Boston's sake and in Boston's name. We of Philadelphia steer quite wide of this amiable if hasty encouragement. We seem to distrust our own power to do anything out of the common ; and when a young man tries to, our minds close against him with a civic instinct of disparagement. A Boston failure in art surprises Boston ; it is success that surprises Philadelphia. We are all guilty of this extraordinary unheartiness towards our own, and perhaps the best that

IN MEMORY OF THOMAS WHARTON

can be said for it is, that it is a prudent method for escaping disappointment.

This chill fell upon Thomas Wharton. It did not prevent his going on, because he was a courageous fighter; but it unquestionably began that isolation from his kind which lost him so much sunshine as his years proceeded into their deeper loneliness. His next venture was upon a plane more ambitious.

Hannibal of New York was published in August, 1886. It is a study of manners in Newport and Wall Street. In it two magnates, their families, and their fortunes, are pictured and contrasted with much careful elaboration and with many pertinent accessories. Most of the scenes have interest, some of them hit out straight with genuine power. There is no lack of diverting talk, and one or two descriptions reveal a charm

IN MEMORY OF THOMAS WHARTON

and a fancy which were the real Thomas Wharton. This novel is better worth reading to-day than many that had a more popular success at that time. The undertaking was too bold. Wharton did not know his magnate with a knowledge sufficiently ripe. Furthermore, he wrote at his usual disadvantage of being under the spell of a favorite. He suffered just then, as it were, from a contagion of Thackeray. His whole mesmerized nature was bent on producing in this day and generation the style and atmosphere of that great master. Nobody saw more plainly than Wharton himself came later to see, how fallacious and perverting such a method in Art must inevitably be, how it destroys the spontaneous, how it fabricates the artificial. Yet *Hannibal of New York* is a far better, stronger book than those who did not read it would admit; and a town must be rich

IN MEMORY OF THOMAS WHARTON

in distinguished men of letters to be so easy in objection, so torpid in approval, as was Philadelphia concerning *Hannibal of New York*.

During these years Thomas Wharton wrote also occasional pieces of prose and verse, mostly contributed to *Puck*, and his account of a journey to England and back in the steerages of the *Oregon* and the *Alaska*, published in *Lippincott's Magazine* for February, 1885, is an admirable article. The chief criticism of the neighborhood was, that it seemed odd to go in the steerage. It was at this time that Wharton's peculiar individual gift began to show itself, though at first in unprofitable ways. His very marked disposition for music, of which mention has been reserved until here, took him constantly to the opera and constantly to the piano. He knew the Germans, the Italians, and

IN MEMORY OF THOMAS WHARTON

the French familiarly, and the opéra comique of the latter gave him a desire to write libretti. Half romantic and half humorous, he turned to the past—to the court of Charlemagne, to the temples of Montezuma, and at length to the Paris streets as Villon knew them. Spaniards, Aztecs, and Paladins began to march through his pages. The loves of Emma and Eginhard were dramatized; conspiracies and balconies abounded here; here Orlando shouted songs about Durandal and Bayard. As the quality of *Charlemagne* was Gothic and feudal, even in its lightness, so did Wharton manage to invest his *Montezuma* with a tropical atmosphere. Had he met with an adequate composer, such as the author of *Fra Diavolo*, or with a public trained to the appreciation of true opéra comique, Wharton would have found prosperity and distinction at once. As

IN MEMORY OF THOMAS WHARTON

it was, his delicate labors went for nothing, except to help him towards his appropriate path.

The newspaper work he began to be busied over in 1888 was mistakenly thought by his friends a disadvantage. It gave him mastery of his ultimate style—at once compact, rapid, and singularly graceful. For while in the columns of the *Times* he dealt with matters municipal and editorial generally, his fancy was asserting itself aside from these as his pen became the readier. Certain stories in *Puck* showed the new departure he was taking, and by 1892 Wharton had learned what he could do. A misfortune contributed to this knowledge of himself. The *Times* building burned down, and his manuscripts perished. From his gayety after this you might have imagined it was a joke to him. But when one who had the right

IN MEMORY OF THOMAS WHARTON

to know more inquired particulars, Wharton replied, simply and with his inveterate stoicism: "Never ask me what I lost there—all I had!" He did not seem able to speak the language of complaint. If he was aware that he deserved more recognition, a heartier hand, from his native town, he never said a word to make any one else aware of it. From the ashes of the *Times* fire he came out to make new manuscripts and better ones. It is possible, it is probable, that he could not bring himself to rewrite the novel which had lain nearly finished in his desk, nor *The Enchiridion of Demoiselles*, a diverting piece of humor and fancy that appeared later in different and briefer guise. He preferred to strike out, leaving the old behind; and this, it certainly seems, helped him to find the field he was meant for.

IN MEMORY OF THOMAS WHARTON

He went forward from *Charlemagne* and *Montezuma*. The manners of to-day, the modern novel, Newport and Wall Street, were not for him. His talent did not by nature wear modern dress, but moved fancifully in costume ; quaint, tender, romantic, satirical, or merely facetious, as the case might be, but in costume always, and always graceful. He belonged to the rare tribe that writes *fabliaux* ; and once he had come to a knowledge of this, he seldom touched Newport or Wall Street again. *François Villon*, a romantic opera in four acts, written in collaboration, was his maturest work of the dramatic order, and his lyric gift in it throughout is certainly remarkable. It is a pity that so many of these happiest verses of his require the context of the situation, and are unavailable in any other setting ; certain ones, however,

IN MEMORY OF THOMAS WHARTON

are placed here to express this side of the author's talent.

Thus, apart from his newspaper work, Wharton came more and more to move in a world of his own. None save his few near friends knew about him, or his hours, or his ways. His scant holidays were generally spent remotely by or upon the sea, for he loved the sand and the salt-water, while nearer home his recreation and chief touch with the world of men was upon the cricket-field: the world of boys, it should rather be said, for this manly soul lived and died a boy at heart. Out on the colonial porches of the club, by the edge of the flat, green grass, and in mirthful communion with the white-flannelled players as they loafed and gossiped, you might see Wharton when office hours were up. He would listen to the cricket talk, impetuous in praise and

IN MEMORY OF THOMAS WHARTON

advice, hot in the banter, never laughing more heartily than when the joke fell upon himself. — Or else, up-stairs, when evening came and dinner-time, out on the porch there with a book, to dine, and to look over the green with suddenly absent eyes. Here often, when the boys had gone to their homes, would Wharton's lonely figure sit in the dusk, and he would sip claret and dream until time for the office and the suburban train took him away.

His wide reading, his music, his many tastes, gave him, of course, an unusual equipment for journalism; and when required he could write a notice of a foreign book, or of a symphony concert, or of a Wagner opera, with more poise and cultivation of judgment than many, than most, of his brotherhood. It is uncommon in journalism to find any one man so well seasoned with va-

IN MEMORY OF THOMAS WHARTON

rious specialties. He did not have to run to a book of reference, he wrote from the familiarity of years. His taste in painting was perhaps the least one with him, and certainly the one least attended to; but here also his sound mind and sound body helped him to see straight, think clearly, and abstain from nonsense. After an exhibition of Impressionist pictures in New York (whither he would often eccentrically drift on his "day off" to see some opera, or prize-fighter, or what not), he returned with a set of verses, of which this was the final one:

"And if the purple curfew tolls the knell of
purple day,
And the purple herd winds lowing upon
the purple lea,
And the purple ploughman homeward plods
his purple way,
You may leave the world to darkness—
but don't leave it to me."

IN MEMORY OF THOMAS WHARTON

Who that knew him cannot hear him saying that?

His *Bobbo*, published in 1895, was the sign he had arrived. Not only did Philadelphia rub its eyes and declare that, after all, here was a good thing, but much wider recognition than this came to him. An American composer requested him to dramatize it for a light opera; an English manager and playwright cabled for permission to do the same. It was played in England in the provinces, but not in London, apparently; to what sort of music and how well sung, no word has reached this side. But honest money was paid for it. Further still, a well-known actress desired that *Bobbo* be turned into a drama for her. Wharton wrote it into a play, accordingly, and perchance in this third shape the American stage may yet witness his graceful and dainty piece of fancy.

IN MEMORY OF THOMAS WHARTON

At all events, here it is, preserved in this small volume with *The Last Sonnet of Prinzivalle di Cembino*. These two *fabliaux*, in which the author's fantastic gift declares itself outright and moves outright in costume, are his last works and his best. The rest gathered in these pages does not pretend to be so completely wrought ; but, verse or prose, it is selected to show the peculiar vein of talent that was Wharton's own, and to the direct expression of which he came so slowly but so surely. When the sudden end overtook him he was full of plans, as has been said, and the sky of his world was clearing from its long day of cloud. He is gone now where clouds are not. But those who remember him will like to remember him at the edge of the cricket-green, laughing with the boys in the white flannels ; or, when the dusk had come, dining on the up-stairs

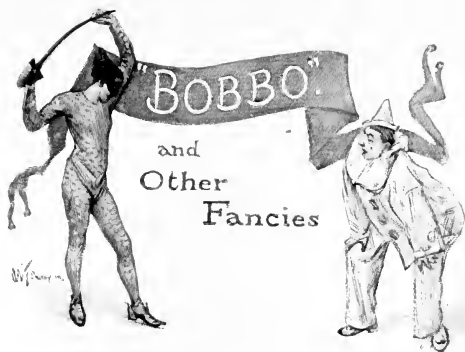
IN MEMORY OF THOMAS WHARTON

porch, alone with his book and his claret and his dreams.

I am loath to leave speaking of Thomas Wharton. What has not been said is so much. But it cannot be said. Of all the friends I have known, life brought to him more hard knocks, and less balm for them, than any; and he fought it out cheerily and in silence, like the loyal heart that he was.

OWEN WISTER.

PHILADELPHIA, 1897.







“BOBBO”

IT was Ash-Wednesday morning, and, thanks to the carnival the night before, the labors of Monsieur Anatole Doblai, most respected of the magistrates of Paris, seemed likely to be severe. True, the prospect did not weigh upon the mind of the worthy magistrate, who customarily busied himself only with his duty, and accepted that duty in whatever form it was arrested and brought before him, so to speak, by the gendarmes. But the thought of a long and harassing session was anything but refreshing to another functionary of the court—the clerk, Paul

"BOBBO" AND OTHER FANCIES

Patureau. Half asleep and nodding was Monsieur Paul as he sat and waited for the hour of opening court; his head ached, and the riotous melodies of the carnival still rang in his ears. He had been out very late himself—oh, very late!—and this morning his dearly despised official duties seemed, like the vast court-room, more forbidding and gloomy than ever.

Now when a young man finds his office gloomy in the morning and his clerical duties irksome, that generally means that he has a soul above routine, and dissipation the night before only aggravates his unrest. And as a matter of fact, Paul Patureau deemed that in being made a clerk he had arrived at the wrong address: like most other young Frenchmen, he thought he had been directed "*À la Gloire.*" And he wished to be, instead of a clerk in the



“HE HAD BEEN OUT VERY LATE HIMSELF”



“BOBBO”

Correctional Court, a poet, a dramatist, and most particularly a writer of librettos—librettos that should make all Paris laugh and sing and dance; that should go round the world, like the *Grande Duchesse* or the *Fille de Madame Angot*; that should bring him fame and money and the friendship of the Muse—and it need not be said that as yet he had not achieved his *chef-d'œuvre*. Alas! the dramatic ambition, if it is only to write a play around a tank, is the most torturing of all ambitions, for while there are theatres and actors the appetite can never be controlled. As it feeds it grows and grows; it begins in the gallery and descends by degrees to the orchestra stall; sometimes it may even conquer the green-room and the coulisse; but thus to feed unsatisfied is the bitterest vanity if the ideas will not arrive. And that was the

“BOBBO” AND OTHER FANCIES

difficulty with Paul Patureau. Ideas cut him dead.

Except when he was asleep. For when he was asleep and dreaming the most striking plots revealed themselves to him, whole dramas performed themselves before him as author and sole spectator; only, when he awoke he could not remember a single situation. It was a new demonstration of Fate's unfailing and subtle irony that poor Paul Patureau should nightly renew the bitterness of his own conviction that he deserved success, and daily exasperate himself against his own unlucky memory as being to blame for his inability to command it. Yes, when he slept he saw all kinds of plays, with characters and motives, plots and stories, drawn from every age and clime; heroes more romantic than Ruy Blas, more comic than Figaro; theatrical surprises more

“BOBBO”

thrilling than the horn in *Hernani*, more clever than the scented glove in *Diplomacy*; and as for stage pictures, he had but to close his eyes and they crowded on his sight, magnificent in their complex accuracy and perfection. Yet what good did they do to him? None at all. Now, at this very moment, should he yield to his overwhelming desire to doze off, forgetful of the criminals and the gendarmes and the stuffy, evil-smelling crowd of spectators, he would probably witness one of these very productions, to be performed only once, and then to be lost forever—which would leave him no better off. Still, if he remained awake, the criminals and the gendarmes and the spectators would suggest nothing to him, and he would in addition be bored, so that there was some reason for going to sleep.

"BOBBO" AND OTHER FANCIES

"Indeed, I wish I could go to sleep," he said to himself, and he folded his arms and closed his eyes. Almost every Frenchman looks as if he had artistic possibilities, and with his pale cheeks, the result of the carnival, and thin, delicate, closed eyelids, the young clerk was by no means a bad type of a poet and a dreamer. "A pretty figure I must be," he said, drowsily, to himself, "to assist at the administration of justice to unfortunate carnival-makers who have been less cautious than myself!" And he began to wonder how he could best secure the magistrate's clemency for some of those very unfortunates in whom he was particularly interested. Among the prisoners waiting their turn to appear before Monsieur Doblay were certain masqueraders, who, it was said among the ushers, were well-known actors; they



“AND EVERY TIME THE PRINCESS SIGHS”

1. *Chlorophyll a* and *Chlorophyll b* were determined by the method of Arar and Collins (1971). The *Chlorophyll a* and *Chlorophyll b* contents were expressed as $\mu\text{g/g}$ of dry weight.

“BOBBO ”

had been quarrelling among themselves at a restaurant after the ball, and their quarrel had grown so violent that the whole party had been taken into custody. It may be guessed with what sympathy Monsieur Paul viewed their incarceration. If he could have passed upon their offence, their detention would have been very quickly at an end.

All of a sudden there broke out from the adjoining room, where the prisoners were in custody, a snatch of a chorus :

“ And every time the princess sighs,
Her tearful subjects wipe their eyes.”

Paul started up, instinctively crying out “Silence !” and he heard the officers calling for order ; but a few voices still continued :

“ They sorrow most because her griefs
Entail such waste of handkerchiefs.”

"BOBBO" AND OTHER FANCIES

"Outrageous! What do they mean by such a disturbance?" said a stern voice behind him, and Paul turned with an almost guilty realization of the dignity of the court and of Monsieur Doblay. To tell the truth, he had just lost his own consciousness of official dignity in the perception that the words of the chorus were new to him, and that discovery never fails to set the nerve cells of the amateur tingling.

He explained the situation to Monsieur Doblay.

"Actors, indeed! They take great liberties."

"They are a most picturesque collection," said Paul, longing to find a good word to throw in on their behalf. "There is a Punchinello, a Harlequin, a Pierrot, a Pantaloon, a Domino Noir, a Pierrette—"

"The classics, eh?" growled Mon-

THE MAGISTRATE



THE MAGISTRATE

Handwritten text, possibly a signature or list of names, located in the top left corner.

“BOBBO”

sieur Doblay. “They wish to turn my court-room into a scene from Racine?”

“Monsieur,” cried Paul, suddenly illumed, “I have it! They must be singing from the new operetta at the Folles-Farces; it is the one operetta I have not heard; but only because I had not time; and perhaps this is the cast.”

“Have them in at once,” said Monsieur Doblay, replying, it almost seemed, to Paul’s unspoken wish. “Have them in, and we will see how they excuse themselves for their follies.”

“Ah, monsieur, wait till you see the Pierrette,” said Paul. “She is a nymph—a true nymph! Oh, she is wonderful!”

It is always these old friends of ours who are getting into trouble, thought Paul, as the masqueraders were ushered into the court-room, dishevelled, hag-

“BOBBO” AND OTHER FANCIES

gard, absurdly out of keeping with the daylight in their carnival paint. The Pierrot and the Punchinello led, followed by all the other familiar figures—a Pantaloon, a Harlequin, a Columbine (wrapped in a long fur cloak), a Domino Noir, and two young men in dress-coats and false noses; their costumes gave them all that droll, half-deprecating look of conscious guilt which Punchinello and Pierrot wear before the Law. And Paul, as he prepared to take down their names with a stub-pen on stiff court paper, felt himself a figure in the comedy which the carnival and the stage hand down unchanged, eternal—the comedy which shows man human, weak, but therefore lovable.

And here a singular incident happened. For while this red-and-white procession was being marshalled towards the seat of justice, to the immense de-

“BOBBO”

light of the habitués of the court-room, an altercation was heard to arise next door, in the room devoted to the prisoners. “I will not accompany the rest of the troupe,” cried a woman’s voice—a young and fresh voice. “I am the prima donna, my good man, and I insist on my entrée!”

“You hear her? That is Adèle,” murmured the Pierrot, as he lounged forward, his eyes dropping with sleep. He shrugged his sloping shoulders. It was indeed Mademoiselle Adèle, of the Folles-Farces, as Paul all of a sudden became aware; and a hard time the gendarme had to bring her out into the court-room, flushed, frowning, mutinous, long strands of her straight, glossy black hair undone and falling over her creamy cheeks and the white sleeves of her Pierrette dress. The tall rebellious androgyn tossed back her hair and put

“BOBBO” AND OTHER FANCIES

her hands on her supple slim hips, and looked devastation at the magistrate ; but he was not nearly so much affected as was Monsieur Paul Patureau as he took the names down.

He thought it more appropriate to set them out as a cast, as follows :

PUNCHINELLO.....MM. TAVERNIER
PIERROT.....BRÉBANT.
PANTALON.....MUELLER.
HARLEQUIN.....GERVAIS.
COLUMBINE.....Mmes. JOLIFROY.
DOMINO NOIR.....GAUDRION.
PIERRETTE.....ADÈLE.

All of the Théâtre des Folles-Farces. In addition to these, M. Rébus of the *Matinée*, and M. Obus of the claque.

Monsieur Doblai listened gravely to the report of the gendarme. A case of disorderly conduct, fracas, and defiance of the authorities at the Café des Blafards. Blows had been struck and fur-



"AND LOOKED DEVASTATION AT THE MAGISTRATE"

[illegible]

“BOBBO”

niture broken. The women of the party encouraged the participants. The defendants Brébant and Rébus had taken no part in the fracas, but on the appearance of the authorities had interfered to protect their companions. It had consequently been necessary to arrest the whole party.

“And all,” cried Mademoiselle Adèle, “because Tavernier cannot act Bobbo!”

“Silence!” cried the ushers. And everybody stood aghast.

Monsieur Doblav pressed his fingers together and looked over his spectacles, not so much severely as reflectively, at the rebellious Pierrette, so full of grace and wild beauty.

“Upon my word,” he said, at last, “I should be glad to have some explanation why so many people of reputation and intelligence have been engaging in such a lamentable dispute. Is it only

"BOBBO" AND OTHER FANCIES

because Monsieur Tavernier cannot act Bobbo? Pray, what is Bobbo?"

"An opera bouffe, Monsieur le Juge," said the actress, proudly inclining her head, "composed for the Folles-Farces by Monsieur Brébant there, and the libretto is by Monsieur Tavernier himself. And I am the Princess Lisa."

"You mean that you take that part in the opera?"

"Yes, Monsieur le Juge. And Monsieur Tavernier has the title rôle."

"Which he sustains with the utmost art," murmured Brébant.

Adèle gave him a glance which might have withered him.

"Which he does not sustain with art, Monsieur le Juge—oh, not at all. For though it is an adorable little story, but adorable, it does not draw the public; and why? Because Monsieur Tavernier, though a comedian not a little proud of

“BOBBO”

his own prowess, cannot carry out the very part he has imagined for himself.” And here her slender limbs began visibly to chafe under the oppression of keeping still. Her voice rang higher, but always sweet. “And the Folles-Farces is a new theatre, Monsieur le Juge; not a rich theatre. It is most important to us to draw the public; and we do not draw the public, monsieur, because Monsieur Tavernier cannot act Bobbo. And we shall all starve!” And she looked daggers at poor Tavernier, who twisted his hands together—the thick, short-fingered hands of a true bouffe actor—and drew a long sigh.

“And yet,” said Monsieur Doblay, gravely, “if there was a quarrel, mademoiselle, there must have been those who diasagreed with you. Why did the quarrel arise?”

“Because,” cried Mademoiselle Adèle,

"BOBBO" AND OTHER FANCIES

"I frankly counselled Monsieur Tavernier to leave the cast. As a friend."

"That was the way of it, Monsieur le Juge," said Brébant, who shrugged his shoulders with languid cynicism. "She frankly counselled my colleague, the author of the operetta, part owner of the theatre, stage-manager, and leading actor, to leave the cast. I forgot to add that it was to him she owed her engagement."

"And when Mademoiselle Adèle gave this advice to Monsieur Tavernier there was opposition?" asked Monsieur Doblav.

"Pronounced," said Brébant.

"Vociferous," said Rébus. "Even minatory."

"Upon which"—Mademoiselle Adèle's eyes were blazing indignantly at Brébant, but he persevered relentlessly—"upon which Mademoiselle Adèle treated her

"BOBBO"

colleagues, particularly Mademoiselle Jolifroy, to epithets of an injurious character."

"Pray, if I might ask—"

"I called them pigs of gallery-crushers," said Adèle, impetuously breaking in.

"The words were uttered in heat," said Brébant, dryly.

"I do not withdraw them," said Adèle.

"And it was on this provocation that the fracas arose?" said Monsieur Doblai, patiently.

"As if the words had been dynamite," said Rébus.

There was a moment's silence.

"Ladies and gentlemen," said the magistrate, "I am afraid that I see nothing for it but to fine you all. I regret that there should be differences among you behind the scenes, if I may

"BOBBO" AND OTHER FANCIES

so express myself; but the law really cannot concern itself with the origin of these differences."

"I would leave the cast willingly," said Tavernier, whose heavy face looked so sad that his Punchinello's hump seemed to belong to him, "but we cannot afford another actor."

"Monsieur le Juge," said Madame Gaudrion, speaking with dignity from the mysterious folds of her domino, "I desire it should go on record as the opinion of those members of the company whose sentiments are in accord with what has just fallen from the lips of Monsieur Brébant, that the rôle of Bobbo is perfectly sustained by Monsieur Tavernier, and that if any one's acting is at fault it is Mademoiselle Adèle's."

"Mazette ! I believe you," murmured the little Jolifroy. (Understudy.)

“BOBBO”

From Adèle's eyes shot forth a flame of contempt; she spread her small brown hands wide to the poles. “Listen, Monsieur le Juge,” she cried—“listen, and you will understand why they all speak evil of me. I am alone against them all, and last night they would have driven me out of the theatre forever, except that Monsieur Gervais, that good young man whom you see there as Harlequin, Monsieur le Juge, and Monsieur Obus, with the false nose, like chivalrous and gallant friends, constituted themselves my champions—and the resistance they encountered was such that the gendarmes were hurled upon us. It is true, Monsieur le Juge—it is true that I act badly; that in my great scene where I should laugh I want to cry—and thus I am so angry that I cannot laugh at all—and the whole scene is

“BOBBO” AND OTHER FANCIES

spoiled, and the whole play is spoiled ; and our happiness, and our business, and my career, all, all are spoiled ! But why ? Because it is Bobbo who should make me want to laugh, and every night when I play it is Bobbo who makes me want to cry !”

“Fudge !” said Madame Gaudrion, decisively, and quite loud enough to be heard.

“You say that, madame—” began Adèle ; but Monsieur Doblav silenced her with a word.

“You are a firebrand, mademoiselle,” he said, and he turned to Brébant. “As I am still in the dark, monsieur, perhaps you will explain a little further.”

“Willingly, Monsieur le Juge,” said the Pierrot. “The fact is, Mademoiselle Adèle is convicting herself by her own testimony, for Monsieur Tavernier’s rôle, admirably conceived, is one of those

“BOBBO”

which blend humor and pathos, and it is the pathos which should make, not Mademoiselle Adèle, you understand, but the Princess Lisa laugh. And if Mademoiselle Adèle forgets that she is the Princess Lisa, and herself feels the pathos of the scene, she is not an actress, that is all.”

“Ah!” said Monsieur Doblay, looking benignly wise. “The paradox of acting.”

“Exactly, Monsieur le Juge.”

“But,” cried Adèle, in a transport, “it is Tavernier who is not acting!”

“Not acting!” cried Brébant, Gervais, and Mueller together. In fact, the whole company turned to Adèle with looks of astonishment.

“No, he is not acting! Do you suppose that I, an actress, cannot tell? It is real with him; yes, I affirm it, Monsieur le Juge, it is real with him!

"BOBBO" AND OTHER FANCIES

and that makes it real with me, and I cry instead of laughing."

At this remarkable statement all eyes were turned on Tavernier. His face was doleful enough, but he only shrugged his hump, as if to say, "I do not understand, but I will not oppose her."

Monsieur Doblav laid down his pen in despair. "The further we go," he said, "the greater is my perplexity. Suppose, mademoiselle, I were to ask you to give me a brief *précis* of the plot, and then perhaps I shall understand. For really it has come to this, that Monsieur Tavernier's acting is on trial, and I feel it my duty to examine into his case and pronounce one way or the other."

It seemed to Paul Patureau as if his ideas mysteriously communicated themselves to his superior, and, what was more remarkable, controlled him.

“BOBBO”

Adèle stood forward. She made a gesture of such grace and eloquence as thrilled Paul Patureau to the marrow. “Monsieur le Juge,” she said, “I am overcome by the honor—oh, but overcome! You ask me for the plot of *Bobbo*, Monsieur le Juge. Monsieur Tavernier’s idea was charming, most charming; and I should be the first to make its eulogiums, for he honored me by giving me the chief rôle—after his own. I, do you see, am the Princess Lisa. The scene is laid in Italy at the time they called the Middle Ages—but how did they know then they were the Middle Ages, Monsieur le Juge?—and I am very melancholy. Oh, I am the most melancholy Princess that ever was known! They give fêtes for me, balls, tournaments, cavalcades, water parties, illuminations—all to no purpose; they might as well have paraded the funerals

“BOBBO” AND OTHER FANCIES

of the town before me. Then they have plays to amuse me, jugglers, clowns, dancing dogs, acrobats, the whole Folies-Bergères; worse and worse—I weep all day long, and I swear that nothing can cure me. So my father, the King, who is excellently played by Monsieur Mueller, Monsieur le Juge—my father is in agonies; for not only am I his favorite child, but if I do not marry, the kingdom must go to his brother, whom he despises. And when they talk to me of marriage I weep so bitterly that even Madame Gaudrion, my governess—you understand, my most aristocratic governess—gives me up. So the King has an idea. He offers my hand to any one will make me laugh. Is not that an idea worthy of a father? But, nevertheless, so stupid are men that numbers of poor young princes and counts and barons come and try to

“BOBBO”

win a smile from me, and they all fail, and their heads are taken off by the headsman—Monsieur Gervais. Such things happen, you know, in opera bouffe—in the Middle Ages. And of course, as these repeated executions happen, I go into convulsions of grief, and grow more and more melancholy.”

“Because none of the young men succeeds?” asked Monsieur Doblay, with a smile.

“Possibly,” said Mademoiselle Adèle. “But of course,” she added, with a sudden and dazzling smile of her own—“of course I do not confess that to myself, so there my poor father is at the end of his resources; and even my sister, the Princess Beatrice (played by Mademoiselle Jolifroy), confesses she does not know what is to be done. And as a last resource my father thinks once more of Bobbo. Bobbo, Monsieur le

“BOBBO” AND OTHER FANCIES

Juge, is the most celebrated jester in the world—irresistible, enchanting, the very soul of drollery and humor. It is not only that his wit is so quick and keen, but his features are the perfect epitome of comedy. You die of laughing just to look at him ; it is impossible to remain grave in his presence. My father would have brought him before me long ago but for one unfortunate circumstance — Bobbo is attached to the court of our young and hot-headed neighbor the Prince Eugenius. Now some time ago, before all these experiments that ended so sadly on the headsman's block, the Prince personally asked for my hand, and, as I declined to hear of marriage, it was refused him. So he vowed that if my melancholy were not removed by the announcement of his suit I might remain in my present state of depression till the end of my days be-

“BOBBO”

fore he would lift a finger to prevent it. Accordingly my father goes to war with him, captures both him and Bobbo, and brings the captives back to court. For he is a terrible man, my father, as the Prince, who is Monsieur Brébant, finds out.”

“I begin to see the plot,” said Monsieur Doblay, deeply interested. Court officers and spectators too all hung upon her words.

“Is it not too natural?” cried Adèle, her eyes sparkling. “What stupid beings fathers are, Monsieur le Juge! Why should the King suppose that I, who have succeeded in my obstinacy—yes, I admit that it is obstinacy—the idea of weeping one’s eyes out like that for any other reason!—that I, who have persisted in torturing my lachrymal glands while any number of nice young men were trying to entertain me, should

“BOBBO” AND OTHER FANCIES

all of a sudden face about, dry my eyes, and laugh like a cook at the antics of a professional clown? Much he knows about a woman! Actually, when he brings Bobbo before me, he is smiling, for the first time in years. Poor man, he is doomed to disappointment! Perhaps Bobbo is not over-confident, for he knows what will happen to him if he fails; but no matter how he exerts himself—and in two minutes he has the rest of the court rolling on their sides on the floor—Monsieur le Juge, I pay absolutely no attention to him. He says the wittiest, most excruciating things; I am deaf. He gambols and capers so as to make you ill with laughing; I scarcely lift my eyebrows. He even makes sport of his master, the Prince, for suffering himself to be captured; I turn away indifferent. And then what happens is that he loses his

“BOBBO”

courage, he falters, he stammers, he wrings his hands, and finally falls on his knees and begs pathetically to be spared. Consequently my father orders him to be beheaded at once.”

“He was wrong,” said Monsieur Doblav, judicially.

“Very wrong, Monsieur le Juge; but, after all, see how fortunately it turned out! For, on hearing his sentence, Bobbo, in despair, turns to me and sings a song begging me to intercede for him; he joins his wrinkled old hands together, and the tears run from his poor old face, and his nose is red, and his eyes are bleared, and his voice cracks and creaks, and altogether he looks so absurd and ridiculous, and he is such a refreshing, delightful, irresistible contrast to the terrified and unnatural gayety which every one about me has been forced to exhibit, that I burst

“BOBBO” AND OTHER FANCIES

out into a good hearty fit of laughter, the first in years. Bobbo has saved me !”

Brava! There followed general applause, which was at once suppressed, but which did not seem to annoy Monsieur Doblay very greatly. He smiled with satisfaction at the escape of Bobbo, and by the nodding of his head appeared to congratulate the Princess on the breaking of the spell that afflicted her. As for Paul, his heart sank. “There!” he said to himself; “do you wonder that it falls to the lot of others to write libretti, and not to mine? Effectively! They have ideas, while I—”

“And so you marry the Prince?” said Monsieur Doblay, approvingly.

“Oh, not yet!” cried Adèle, radiant with her success. “Of course finally I do; but if it is ended now it would be flat indeed.”

“BOBBO”

Paul's heart sank again ; he had supposed this was the *finale*, and behold he did not know the elements of construction !

“What happens next is that I become serious once more, and swear that as my father offered to marry me to whomsoever should make me laugh, and as Bobbo has been the one to succeed, I will marry Bobbo. This, of course, is meant to punish the Prince for his pride ; yet, after all, I have a—a little feeling for Bobbo. But you may guess,” cried Adèle, with a heightened color, “how this resolve affects my father and the court, and it is only a very little while before they are all in tears at my feet, begging me to reconsider my decision. And as they are now the melancholy ones, I am well amused, I promise you. ‘If you all snivelled till doomsday,’ I say to

“BOBBO” AND OTHER FANCIES

them, ‘you couldn’t make me break faith with my dear Bobbo.’ Poor Bobbo, you know! ready to put his head in a meal-bag and pull the strings. Well, at last the situation is resolved—but you must ask Madame Gaudrion how.”

“How, Madame Gaudrion?”

“Oh, very simply,” replied that lady, in her measured tones. “I am the governess—very aristocratic, as Made-moiselle Adèle says—and I have been talking a great deal of my family pretensions, and setting my cap at the King; and it turns out that Bobbo is my husband.”

Whereat there was a laugh.

“And everybody is made happy, except, probably, Bobbo,” commented Monsieur Doblay. “Let me compliment you, Monsieur Tavernier, on the grace and charm of your little theme. The springs of sorrow and happiness

“BOBBO”

lie very close together in our hearts, and you have perceived this and made excellent use of your penetration of human nature.” And he made a polite yet magisterial bow.

“I beg you to believe, Monsieur le Juge, that I know how to value such compliments,” said Tavernier, a little flush of pleasure breaking out on his anxious face. “But the story has gained greatly from Mademoiselle Adèle’s manner of recital.”

“Doubtless she will answer that she has gained her inspiration from the story,” said the courteous magistrate. “But come now, Monsieur Tavernier, here we are on the threshold of the mystery; let us examine it to the bottom. You are charged by this young lady with singing your ballad in such a manner as to prevent her from listening properly in the character of the Princess

“BOBBO” AND OTHER FANCIES

Lisa. Now here I am about to throw out a suggestion which may assist us. Perhaps the difficulty lies in the ballad itself, and I should be very glad if you will repeat it, Monsieur Tavernier. Or, better still, if any one here has a libretto—”

Obus stepped forward, solemn-faced leader of the claque. He drew a marked libretto from the pocket of his paletot.

“You will pardon my critical remarks on the margin, Monsieur le Juge,” he observed.

The magistrate found the place, and adjusted his glasses.

“LE CHANSON DE BOBBO

“Oh, is it you, all youth and grace,
Who turn an unrelenting face,
And cruel send
Me to my death, so bent and worn,
So pitiable and forlorn,
So old a friend?

“BOBBO”

“Think! in the nursery, long ago,
A form like mine you used to know,
 With curving back,
With painted cheeks, and staring eyes.
Look at me! don't you recognize
 Your Jumping Jack?

“You only had to pull a string
And he his arms and legs would fling
 A dozen ways;
And then you'd laugh—ah, yes, indeed!
'Twas easy for me to succeed
 In those old days.

“You clasped me to your baby breast,
And cried, “Dear Jack!” and soothed
 to rest
 My clumsy head;
And when they asked you which of all
Your toys the prettiest you'd call—
 “My Jack!” you said.

“Yes, let my poor absurd grimace,
My crooked back and wizened face,
 My pardon make.

“BOBBO” AND OTHER FANCIES

O child, your childhood bring to mind,
And be to Punchinello kind,
For pity's sake!”

While Monsieur Doblay read this aloud, slowly, and with the reserve of a man who does not commit himself to the support of his author, there was a deep silence in the court-room. Then Monsieur Doblay raised his head, and it was not difficult to see that he was disappointed. “I confess,” he said, “I do not find these verses in themselves so affecting as to justify Mademoiselle Adèle's representations.”

There was a little nervous professional stir among the actors, but before any one else could speak in behalf of Tavernier's song, Adèle was boldly making her own special defence. “Mon Dieu, Monsieur le Juge,” she cried, “they are not meant to be read like

“BOBBO ”

verses in a book, you know—they are written for music and the stage effect. Ah, monsieur, if you will ask Monsieur Tavernier to recite them to you, you will see! Yes, Monsieur Tavernier, if you really desire to clear yourself, repeat them to the magistrate—and let him judge.”

“You see, Monsieur le Juge, what she exacts,” was all Tavernier could say.

“After all,” said Monsieur Doblai, “she is correct.” I am misconstruing your verses, Monsieur Tavernier, and I see that my doubt disposes of itself. If the lines are written solely for the actor, there is nothing intrinsically pathetic in them—there can be nothing.” And Monsieur Doblai smiled reassuringly. “And now let me hear you repeat them. Permit me to say that I anticipate a great artistic gratification.”

Tavernier looked over at Adèle, and

“BOBBO” AND OTHER FANCIES

murmured something no one could hear. She, her face flushed, seemed ready to spring upon him, take him by the shoulders, and shake him into action, so eager was she to be proved in the right.

As if fascinated, he kept his troubled eyes fixed upon her, and began, in a low voice :

“Oh, is it you, all youth and grace—”

And as he spoke he betrayed all.

There was no mistaking the import of his tone. The man had a voice that should have made his fortune. Resonant, strong, full of feeling, and yet dominated by a strange and overpowering timbre, a curious vibration, which, though hard and masculine, was inexplicably attractive, and even affecting—a perfect stage voice, intended by nature for comedy and bouffe—it aroused

“BOBBO”

not only instant carnal delight, but also the obscure yearning that accompanies the highest artistic sympathy. But now it was quivering with the deepest pathos. To hear him struck to the heart. Tears sprang unbidden to the eyes. It was an appeal, all concealment thrown aside, to the beautiful young girl who stood before him. It told the whole story of their relations, of his dumb despairing love and her girlish obtuseness, perversity, and self-love. The words fell slowly and like sobs. They conveyed the yearning of a life.

The surprise of his emotion deeply disturbed his hearers. Brébant, in particular, was visibly startled out of his languor, and launched uneasy glances at Adèle. She alone appeared to see in this sudden confession merely the confirmation of her charge. Her eyes

"BOBBO" AND OTHER FANCIES

sparkled with triumph; her foot patted the ground; she could hardly wait until Tavernier had finished. She did not give Monsieur Doblay time to speak.

"You see," she cried—"you see, all of you, that I have told you nothing but the truth—and yet you would not believe me! He sings it himself—and not to the Princess Lisa, but to me. He does not know how to sing it. Hold! I will show you how." And before any one could stop her, she suddenly pushed away Mueller and Obus, clearing a little space for a stage, as it were, and dropped her tall, supple form into a hunchback's crouching pose and began to sing.

It was a most amazing feat of mimicry. Her head sank and rolled on her shoulders, her arms hung long and loose by her sides, her back was crooked—yet all these things were shown by the

“BOBBO”

lightest, swiftest indications, like the heart-breaking falsetto in her rich, splendid voice, which, with her frightened eye and trembling lip, showed the poor Punchinello at his wit's end for refuge. Sing it well? Not the greatest comedian that ever lived, it seemed, could have sung it better—with all its whimpering, its ridiculous, terrified grimaces, its shaking fingers weakly clawing the air, its tottering knees and cracked comic voice, its absurd senile smiles broken by swift spasms of terror as the singer alternated between hope and despair. Adèle subdued it all to her purpose, with the true bouffe touch so perfectly bestowed that the very pathos of it seemed a thing to laugh at, because it so surely promised that happiness was on the other side of the picture. And, indeed, as verse succeeded verse, smiles were running over all their lips,

“BOBBO” AND OTHER FANCIES

as they stood breathlessly listening, ready when she ended to break out into laughter and applause. When all at once, just as she was nearing the end, perhaps overcome by some sudden emotion, perhaps tired by the night of confinement and the strain of the police examination, perhaps at the end of her artist's tether, since extreme were the demands the song made upon her thus to counterfeit a buffo at the height of his art—for whatever reason, she faltered, gasped, and, tottering against Mueller, who caught her around the waist and supported her, burst into tears.

Then, heartlessly enough, but with full professional enjoyment of her breakdown, the actors raised a peal of laughter, in which all joined—except Tavernier. He stood apart, forgotten, watching her with his burning eyes. But the little Jolifroy was especially merry, and

“BOBBO”

clapped her hands in an ecstasy of mirth.

Adèle leaped up, furious, angry gleams darting from her eyes. “What do you mean by laughing at me?” she cried. “You are all beggars, wretches, vile travesties of actors, whom the public will cover with shame!” That her tumult of wrath must have physical relief was obvious. It was the little Jolifroy who suffered. Adèle’s glance fell instinctively on her understudy’s sniggering face, and she smacked it.

A cry of horror rose—gendarmes sprang at the offender. Contempt of court, *lèse-majesté*—what had not Adèle committed? She herself, at the realization of her offence, paled and stood trembling in the grasp of the military police before the magistrate.

The only reason why Tavernier was not scuffling with those same gendarmes

“BOBBO” AND OTHER FANCIES

was that Brébant and Rébus, by a common impulse, threw their arms about him and restrained him.

Monsieur Doblai seemed for a moment lost in consternation at the iniquity of the deed which his own lenity had encouraged; then he roused himself, and addressed the prisoner at the bar.

“Mademoiselle,” he said, sternly, “insensible of the kindness with which you have been treated here, you have permitted yourself to commit an outrage upon the dignity of this court which merits the severest retribution. And, what is more, you have shown yourself intolerant, unreasonable, unjust to a brother artist, who, after all, can only do his best, as his talent permits, and to whom it would appear you are bound in very gratitude to defer. Art is not life, mademoiselle; it is but a representa-

“BOBBO”

tion of life, and all the more, therefore, perfection in it cannot be demanded or hoped for. It rests with all artists to give the public their best; but having done so, they must be satisfied. And since this seems impossible to you, since your ungovernable temper makes you a firebrand among your colleagues, the punishment that I must now impose upon you should be responsive to this fault, that justice may prove remedial. I condemn you to prison, *Mademoiselle Adèle*, for forty days—and suspend the sentence on condition that you pass the whole of the ensuing Lent in retirement, in good works and meditation, without appearing once at the theatre. And that will teach you, perhaps, to control yourself.”

“What, *Monsieur le Juge*—leave the stage?”

Then might you have seen *Adèle*,

“BOBBO” AND OTHER FANCIES

breaking from the gendarmes, kneel, actually kneel like a guilty sinner, before the tribune, imploring mercy. To be condemned for forty days to leave the theatre—to leave a successful play, to see which the house was crowded every evening—she would be forgotten by the public, by her friends—her understudy would supplant her—and the theatre was her life, her very being! She would die without it; to do penance would kill her!

Would not Monsieur le Juge fine her—she could afford to pay a fine—oh, a heavy fine!—and let her go?

And it did occur to Monsieur Doblai that his scheme of poetic justice did not consider the management of the Folles-Farces; and he said, “After all, I ought not to visit the penalty of your misbehavior on the theatre, and therefore a fine—”

“BOBBO”

To every one's surprise, here Tavernier interrupted. “No, Monsieur le Juge,” he cried, quite beside himself with suffering, “I would rather let her go!”

“Let me go?” exclaimed Adèle, her face suddenly growing white.

“Yes,” he answered, turning on her, his breast heaving; “we cannot go on like this—one of us must leave the Folles-Farces—there is a limit to what a man's heart can bear; and since you mean to break mine, since there is no limit to your contempt, your disdain, and your ill usage, I must protect myself—I must snap the chain in two. God knows I would give you all—the theatre, my heart, my life, if you would but accept them—God knows I have offered you both my heart and my life, again and again, and you would not take them—”

“BOBBO” AND OTHER FANCIES

“You have offered me your heart?” said Adèle, with a strange sound in her voice.

“Yes,” he cried, in exaltation; “every night, in the song I sing to you, the song I wrote to you, the song I cannot sing because every word, every note, breaks my heart when you will not look at me or care for me. But why should you?—you, so beautiful, so young—”

He could not go on.

Adèle drew a long, shuddering breath; her face was white. She choked as she tried to speak. Finally she said, “I did not know—I did not know I was so much to you.” And after a pause she added, “I have promised to marry Brébant.”

Tavernier gave a cry, and then covered his ghastly face with his hands. Brébant looked at them both from

THE
PASTORAL
CARE



"PAUL PATUREAU RETURNED TO HIS SENSES"

[illegible]

“BOBBO”

under the dark, delicate lines of his eyebrows, pulled at his mustache, and said, “Fichtre!”

Nobody seemed able to speak, and there was a long silence.

All at once Adèle started, and turned and looked at Brébant. He met her look steadily, but without budging a hair's-breadth from his attitude of profound, concentrated attention. Then the blood surged back to her face again, and she cried, in excited but clear and resolute tones, “But as Brébant does not love me—I release him.”

When we wake from a dream the eye still sees distinct before it the mental image which was the last impressed on the retina of our imagination, and which somehow seems the one which woke us out of sleep. And as Paul Patureau returned to his senses and found the real

“BOBBO” AND OTHER FANCIES

court-room again before him, and heard the tread of the real Monsieur Doblay echoing behind him on the tribune, there hung for an instant clearly outlined in his vision the miniature actors of the supposititious theatre created by his drowsy fancy as they disposed themselves before their flight — Tavernier catching Adèle to his breast; Mueller and Gervais and Rébus and Jolifroy and all the rest grouped about in various attitudes of astonishment and delight, or perhaps envy; Brébant slowly vouchsafing the magistrate a glance whose faint suggestion of relief was to Paul Patureau the subtlest touch of it all. How willing Paul would have been to delay them just a moment longer, to hear what Tavernier was saying to Adèle, or himself to have saluted the bride! But he saw them go without a pang; for this once he recollected the

“BOBBO”

plot of his operetta. He had at last dreamed successfully.

And now he had nothing left to do but write his libretto, get it accepted by some popular composer, and produced. Lucky Paul Patureau!

THE LAST SONNET OF
PRINZIVALLE DI CEMBINO

THE LAST SONNET OF PRINZIVALLE DI CEMBINO

IT was in the year of the great Pazzi plot that Prinzivalle di Cembino, whom his fellow-Florentines called "the bird-lover," wrote his last sonnet to Madonna Ghita, the wife of Ugo degli Carrecci; and before the Pazzi rose against the Medici no man expected those sonnets to come to an end less than did the ardent soldier, lover, and poet who wrote them. Whether, if the Pazzi had not risen, the sonnets would never have been interrupted is, of course, impossible to say. But they did rise; and immediately there-

“BOBBO” AND OTHER FANCIES

after, if not, indeed, in direct consequence thereof, Prinzivalle became the hero of one of the most characteristic episodes in all the annals of love—the episode of the little fig-peckers.

There was once a great connoisseur who declared that the classic examples of wit were those which could only be said in a certain century, of a certain thing, to a certain man. Obviously this is only a partial application of a principle, and it may be easily maintained that these may be—I do not say they are—the touchstones of all classic episodes. But whether they are or not, I have always deemed the episode of the little fig-peckers worthy to be considered a classic, because it could only have happened about the little fig-peckers to Prinzivalle di Cembino in the Quattrocento.

LAST SONNET OF PRINZIVALLE

And first the sonnet. Prinzivalle
called it—

“ON THE SUMMIT

“When over us the awful peaks arose
I faltered, and upon me fell Love’s eyes,
Divine and calm, and my soul’s cowardice
Then did his deep sad look to me disclose.
He spoke not, nor reminded me of those
Vows wherewith I had made my lady glad,
To follow him, in pilgrim habit clad,
But onward went alone among the snows.
And bound there in the spell laid by my sin,
Long straining after him my tearful sight,
I watched him pass the glacier’s distant
crown
And slowly to the very summit win.
But as he stood upon the silent height
I saw him at his bleeding feet look down.”

The story of the growth of Prinzi-
valle’s love for his mistress is easily
told: it was in its essence that of any
Italian of the time for the lady on

“BOBBO” AND OTHER FANCIES

whom fell the desire of heart and soul at one in a mystic ecstasy over beauty, and a miraculous power of expressing surely the vividest type in which passionate humanity has ever seen itself struggling, battling, loving, and conspiring. And yet among all the lovers with whom those mediæval centuries burn, none ever compared with Prinzi-
valle for the devotion with which, while his passion lasted—and it was no fault of his that it ended—he bound himself to his ideal of love, and lived in it and through it and for its sake alone. He was the type; he was the perfect lover. He was the man who was in deed, not in word, all adoration, all hope, all constancy; who gave everything, asked nothing, submitted always; whose love was as ready as his submission, and whom neither disappointment nor possession could in any manner change.

LAST SONNET OF PRINZIVALLE

After all is said and done, this last is the test infallible. What will not a woman do for a man who, after six long years, still sues for what she gives him?

True enough, Prinzivalle's mistress was one of those women who keep alive the fable of fays and witches, and for whom modern science itself finds no words that are not just as superstitious. Prinzivalle saw her first at a company to which he had accompanied his wife, Francesca, in the garden of Pico della Fernandina, and there they fell in love, ardently and unresistingly, at first sight. Perhaps the fact that she was the wife of an enemy of the Medici heightened the attraction; but that stimulus, at most a minor impulse, could only have been felt for a moment. The effect on Prinzivalle was instant and complete. Before they parted he was changed.

“BOBBO” AND OTHER FANCIES

He had been a silent man, a dweller among state politics and party secrets, with no inner life of his own ; she opened the door of his soul for him, and he stood and gazed at this new possession as if he had been the first man to receive a soul. He understood what it meant, and what he might make of it, and therefore he determined to make of it an offering to Madonna Ghita.

Accordingly he began his love-making directly, which was all a man thought of in those days ; their morals were not different from ours, morals being the same in all ages, but their observance of them was quite different. And Prinzi-valle being already hostile to the Car-recci, it was only a matter of swords, which he did not fear at all. Indeed, if he had a preference, it was that Ugo should belie men's sneers and defend his home. But Ugo did not. He was

THE FIRST MEETING



THE FIRST MEETING

LAST SONNET OF PRINZIVALLE

a conspirator, to whom home and honor and love were counters in a gaming bank, high counters, only to be played when ill luck began to spread its black wings and menace, like the devil that it is, and not till then. Why, he had married Ghita di Montefeltro in order to have just such counters in his bank—and now throw them away before his time? Not Ugo! When he met Prinzivalle in the world he could easily look at him with that hollowness behind the eyes that you see in all gamblers and political traffickers: and he was never in the way of meeting Prinzivalle when his wife's lover came riding to the Villa Carrecci. It was very simple for Ugo.

But it was not simple for Prinzivalle. He was one of those men to whom the ethics of emotion are everything, and when with these temperaments emotion does not declare itself strongly

“BOBBO” AND OTHER FANCIES

until manhood, the course and conduct of love become of a passionate importance to which everything else in life is not only subordinate, but subject, slavish; and that love should be blurred by the intrusion of the world's infamies was as incomprehensible to him as it was poignant. And probably if his own self-control had not been so strong and so practised, this very same dark, treacherous complaisance of Ugo's would have chafed and wrung him so that his passion could not have endured. But he could control himself; and he presently began to love Ghita so much that he did.

He loved her very much. He loved her as all women long to be loved—blindly, silently, unquestioningly, with that way of containing a wild tumultuous strength for her sake, which somehow seems to woman man's supreme

LAST SONNET OF PRINZIVALLE

demonstration of passion. This sort of man, though he asks nothing, often takes all; yet Prinzivalle neither asked nor took all, but waited, waited for everything she gave him. They used to meet in a garden of the Villa Carrecci, which lies along the river below the orchards, and is enclosed on its three land sides by a cypress hedge with clipped archways, and statues gleaming in among the green. Oh, they were the scenes for passion, those Italian gardens!—for the infinite yearning and straining of hearts whose fibres were struck and thrilled and racked by vibrations so exquisite that we strive for the perception of them now in vain: they were the distant land of magic transplanted to lie underfoot in beauty that dazed, it was so commanding and so ethereal, so lovely and so quivering with the pain of enchantment. Even

“BOBBO” AND OTHER FANCIES

to-day the heart is troubled among their alleys, their fountains, and their cedars—troubled indescribably; and how much more in the day of Ghita and of Prinzivalle! In his sonnets Prinzivalle came back to the garden again and again, describing it with that tense simplicity which means so infinitely much more than all our raptures; and no wonder he dwelt on the garden, for here Madonna Ghita taught him to be a poet, and taught him what she meant by love.

What did she mean by it? Answer, all who have been under the spell that Prinzivalle suffered; all who have listened to that conjuration and felt the spirit disengage itself from earthly covenants and rise into a rarer, diviner ether, into a place of neither pleasure nor pain; all who for one hour have known a woman who could give substance to woman's eternal promise of earthly paradise, and

LAST SONNET OF PRINZIVALLE

make man seem actually to inhabit therein. Answer! and remember that in those days an old belief, to whose fragments women cling to-day, could still hold sway in women's minds—the belief the troubadours learned from them and taught them in return—the belief that love is an existence of its own. Whence Madonna Ghita derived the strange other doctrines she mingled in with this I cannot tell, nor does it matter. Such mystic beliefs do not need a source besides the agitation of the soul which life itself imparts; nor do they need a soil besides the credulous, aspiring spirit that receives them. Little by little, as Madonna Ghita slowly let her love pass into Prinzivalle's keeping, did she expound to him that ecstatic dream of perfection in love which never wholly dies even in the most material ages; and then, later still,

“BOBBO” AND OTHER FANCIES

added the counsels of discipline of spirit which made of him Heaven knows what! —an adept, we should call him, maybe, in our divinely assorted categories.

At least he believed that she inspired him, and made him impervious to cold and heat, oblivious of danger, strong of counsel, patient of every disappointment, almost a disembodied force. And he delighted to ask difficult and hazardous assignments of the Medici, which he discharged secretly to their utter gratitude and admiration; and then, returning from his nunciatures, the flush of success burning on his brow, he would go to Madonna Ghita, who sat waiting for him, her chin in her hand. And when he had told her what he had done for her she would lift the other hand, which had been hanging by her side the while, and stroke his cheek; and as her look was speech in silence, so her touch

LAST SONNET OF PRINZIVALLE

was fire in snow. These were traits which might well set a man so sensitive tingling with transcendental resolves; and the way she spoke, as if a spirit were dictating to her, and walked without her feet being seen to move, and looked long at him until her face grew pale and seemed to fade away, and only her eyes were left, which shone like fires of illimitable depth—it would be no wonder if these things touched a yet more primitive and superstitious chord in him. And indeed, as Prinzivalle meditated upon her day after day, pondering upon his love as he rode out of the city with his troop, or went guardedly about his mysterious missions, discoursing upon it under subtle coverings with Lorenzo's court of poets and rhetoricians, he began to think she was truly a white spirit. She never seemed to err; she did not waver or change; her beauty

"BOBBO" AND OTHER FANCIES

never faded; grief, care, sickness, fatigue, made no impress upon her; she might be mortal, but she showed no trace of mortality. Was not this a eudæmonia?

But what may possibly have had most effect in convincing Prinzivalle of Madonna Ghita's unearthliness was that through all those years of passion she still withheld something of her love, remained in part inaccessible. No matter how he strove, no matter what he effected in her name, there was still a spiritual communion to be conquered. And she withheld it in terms; telling him she did so, promising that this communion should be his when his lesson was at last learned and he had finally accomplished his triple aim of love, loyalty, and self-relinquishment. No doubt during the period of his long spiritual probation he often expected the guerdon to be his, and found himself doom-

LAST SONNET OF PRINZIVALLE

ed to disappointment; but he endured with patience, and perhaps it will be thought not the least proof of his endurance that he did so, seeing that he perceived how profoundly Madonna Ghita had read him and counted on his obedience.

Thus month succeeded to month and year to year, and the great fact of their love moved on with time, all other things being either tributary to it or non-existent. And Prinzivalle's devotion grew every day more and more implicit; he went on aspiring, burning, asking nothing, striking a still higher note in his sonnets, reaching still higher and more transcendent regions of spiritual love, and longing still more ardently for his promised reward. And when six years had thus been passed, the conspiracy of the Pazzi broke out.

Such a dire event as this, with the mem-

“BOBBO” AND OTHER FANCIES

orable and awful murder of Giuliano de' Medici in the cathedral, and the narrow escape of Lorenzo from the same dreadful fate, would naturally stir Prinzi-
valle's energies to the utmost. After the blow had been struck it fell to his share to direct certain of the measures of vengeance, and it coming to his official knowledge (as any one could have guessed) that Ugo degli Carrecci was one of the conspirators, he sent to seize him. However, Ugo had fled, to take refuge, it was thought, in Constantinople. This Prinzivalle reported to Lorenzo among other news of the conspiracy. On which Lorenzo ordered that Ugo's estates should be sequestered, and that an intendant should be placed over them; but he desired Prin-
zivalle to direct the intendant, privately, that the revenues should be paid to Madonna Ghita, and that she should not be

LAST SONNET OF PRINZIVALLE

disturbed in her possession. And as he was now growing stronger, he bade Prinzivalle, with a smile, convey this assurance to Madonna Ghita—"since," said he, "she was born of a family friendly to the Medici." Which was true enough, for she was sister to the noble Giano di Montefeltro, of Pisa.

Prinzivalle accordingly mounted and rode by the circuitous route he had been accustomed to take to come to the river garden, because this was the open route, and Ugo could always have seen him had he wished it. And it was on that memorable day that, after hearing his news, Madonna Ghita at last declared herself convinced of his absolute self-surrender to the highest ideal of love; and, satisfied of his worthiness, told him freely that she was his, singly and blessedly, to the end of life.

She bade him esteem himself, not the

“BOBBO” AND OTHER FANCIES

most faithful of men, indeed, for that might lead to destructive pride, but a man to whom patience and effort had taught a true constancy. “The last letter of your name,” she said, “is to-day finally graven on my heart, and any one who saw therein could read it complete, like an inscription on a statue, which remains unchanged through many centuries.” And as she spoke there broke into Prinzivalle’s soul something like a light, but so violent that it seemed a new element. His chest labored, he breathed with difficulty, his lips parted, and a divine joy struggled silently upon them. He fell on his knees and embraced the hem of her dress; and Ghita laid her hand upon his head, and he received, as never before, a comprehension of the power of love. “You have performed my bidding unquestioningly,” she said, “and I wish to tell you

LAST SONNET OF PRINZIVALLE

this, that whatever you ask I will in turn perform."

And now for the episode of the little fig-peckers.

We had better pause to imagine the scene—the garden silent in the warm, tender May air, the young leaves and vines glistening in the sun, the cedars purple-green and tall, the statues half hidden in the untrimmed spring cypress—Madonna Ghita, dark-haired and dark-eyed, with her divine, inscrutable look, her arms that lay close to her side like a bird's wings, and her slight, slow, infinitely graceful motions—and Prinzivalle, swarthy, deep-cloaked, and fiery. It was a long time before he so much as spoke, so great was the tranquillity that had fallen upon him; he only gazed into her eyes as they sat side by side upon the stone bench about the dial. At last, as if a girlish timidity had been renewed

"BOBBO" AND OTHER FANCIES

in her by the ardor of his gaze, she who had so long imposed her commands upon him trembled, and her eyes fell. Oh, delicious, unspeakable moment, when creation seems wholly subject to man! No doubt it was requital to Prin-zivalle for all—requital, and something more. So much more that he determined he would ask a favor of her at last—the first after all his servitude. And as in asking some favor he should not only requite her confidence, but have the dear long-attended joy of a pledge from her of his own devising, what should it be?

What first came into his mind was characteristic enough of him.

It was in that particular spring the custom for the Florentine ladies to wear their dresses trimmed about the neck with beccaficos' feathers, and to see Madonna Ghita sharing in this custom

LAST SONNET OF PRINZIVALLE

was, Heaven knows, repellent to Prinzivalle. Not only were the cruelty and the wantonness of it unsuited to her, but it was the first note that had ever jarred him in their intercourse. So he spoke, glad of the confidence that granted his petition before it was framed.

“Madonna Ghita,” said he, “it will seem but a slight thing that I have to ask you, and perhaps only a longing of the fancy. Yet it is of the heart; for my heart is always most tender towards the birds, to whom God permits what he does not permit to us, namely, to wear wings, as the angels do. The favor I ask you is that for my sake you will cease wearing the feathers of the little beccafico.”

“The feathers of the little beccafico?” said Madonna Ghita.

“Yes,” said Prinzivalle.

At this she looked at him as if she

"BOBBO" AND OTHER FANCIES

did not understand, and she said, softly and curiously, "Why do you ask this, Messer Prinzivalle?"

Then Prinzivalle explained to her how the custom was one unsuited to fair ladies, causing wanton slaughter among the song-birds still feeding their young, and not needed for imparting elegance or grace to lovely women.

"Are you sure," she said, gently—"are you sure that these birds are slain wantonly? For this was not my supposition, Messer Prinzivalle."

Grateful for the assurance, he cried, "Yet it is true."

"May it not rather be," she returned, "that they are killed for food and their feathers sold, or that they are killed by the farmers whose figs they peck?"

So then Prinzivalle told Madonna Ghita how the case stood in fact, that

LAST SONNET OF PRINZIVALLE

killing the birds was a danger to the figs, which would thus be left a prey to the worms which were the beccaficos' food.

"For observe," he said, "that the universe, with the firmament, being in form, as it were, a quadrate, wherein all things uphold and support each other, there can be nothing superfluous therein. And there results a certain definite and providential proportion, which when we disturb, the harmony of the universe is lost. Man's dominion, therefore, over the beasts of the field and the birds of the air, as over the rest of terrestrial things, is not given to him that he may destroy them, but that he may make them perform their appointed functions. And if he do not, he will suffer, through the disturbance of the natural harmony. Thus, when for the sake of fashion the beccaficos are killed, man is punished

“BOBBO” AND OTHER FANCIES

by the destruction of his gardens through worms.”

Madonna Ghita was silent for a while, and then, looking on him with sorrowful steadfastness, exclaimed, “How have I been deceived!”

It seemed to Prinzivalle as though he had been struck a blow. And he cried out to her to know what was the matter.

“Is this really the request that you make of me,” she asked, “that I cease wearing beccaficos’ feathers?”

“Surely,” said he.

“Then it is true,” she said, “since you affirm it. And I have given my love, not to the cavalier and poet, Messer Prinzivalle di Cembino, but to a rustic—a boor—who cannot climb with me the heights of love, but remains on the earth, intent on the yield of his fig trees.”

“Virgin Mary!” he cried, aghast, “what can you mean?”

LAST SONNET OF PRINZIVALLE

"To-day," said Madonna Ghita, "at the very flowering of my love after these years of your service, what, oh Heaven, must I hear? Not of me—not of me has your heart been glad, but of the price to be gained by selling the fruits of your gardens."

"I have no gardens of my own," quoth he, trembling. "It is but the common concern of which I speak."

"The common concern," she said, with a dejection of her body, yet her eyes fixed on him. "The common concern," she repeated, in a lingering, wistful voice. And she turned her eyes away.

Well, all that she said seemed unjust and terrifying enough, yet her fixed look and that low voice of sorrow of hers had so long seemed to give him an insight into a higher reason than that on which our justice rests, that he contained him-

“BOBBO” AND OTHER FANCIES

self as best he might, and in a moment found voice to ask her wherein lay his fault.

“Nay, I perceive no fault,” she murmured, but ever with the same sad look.

He adjured her to answer him, of her pity.

After a pause she said: “Is it for me to say? Yet what of your constancy?”

“I inconstant!” was all he could gasp.

“Are you not? For instead of devising some task which should do honor to us both,” she said, “you have preferred ignoble concerns of daily life, impertinent to such an occasion and to such a love as mine. Thus what should have been transcendent has been degraded.” Here she broke off again, and turned her face from him.

Alarmed, he bade her reflect that his request was but born of the moment.

LAST SONNET OF PRINZIVALLE

"Do you not give love the moments?" she asked.

"It was an impulse!" he cried.

"An impulse to forget me?" said Madonna Ghita.

Hereupon he bent his head and pondered, and after pondering lifted his head again and told her he desired she would not think that what he had done was unpardonable, for the request was not in itself unmeet, only inopportune.

"And therefore," she said, gravely, "worse than unmeet."

With a sinking heart he perceived that this left him without reply, and could only answer, expressing himself in fit terms, that he hoped she would not withdraw the high confidence with which she had honored him. She responded, looking at him now with sad kindness, that it was not a matter of her own control, but that if he had in

“BOBBO” AND OTHER FANCIES

any way disturbed that confidence it was her desire and hope that he would restore himself without delay. And she gave him her hand.

“And could you think,” she said, “that I would wear the feathers of the beccafico, knowing that they were procured by wanton cruelty?”

“No — believe me,” he answered, warmly. “Never, dear lady!”

“I will no longer wear them,” she said, and looked at him with peculiar sweetness.

He fell at her feet.

Presently she continued: “Yet, Prinzivalle, I must in candor tell you this, that if I yield to your request herein, the recollection of your inconstancy will be ever present, and will delay, I cannot tell for how long, the return of the supreme communion of our spirits.”

“Then,” he cried, “if that be so, Ma-



IN THE GARDEN



LAST SONNET OF PRINZIVALLE

donna Ghita, wear the beccafico feathers, I pray you, and wear them always; and not only for that reason, but in reminder to me of the heights which my spirit must have ever in view."

And to this she consented; unless, she stipulated, other ladies of Florence should cease the custom, when to uphold it alone might render her conspicuous. Thus were her divine favor and her sustaining aid renewed to him.

And as Prinzivalle knelt once again before her, professing his devotion as of old, Ugo degli Carrecci came swiftly through one of the arches of the hedge, and men-at-arms behind him, and from the two other sides of the hedge came other armed men. They ran in and closed upon Prinzivalle before he could escape to the river. Madonna Ghita gave a loud cry, and he sprang to his feet and struck out with his dagger,

“BOBBO” AND OTHER FANCIES

wounding one man and inflicting a more deadly thrust upon another; but his assailants quickly bore him to the ground and bound him. When he was secured he was carried to the house and locked in an inner room—practically in a dungeon.

It was time for Ugo to play his high stakes, and this was how he was playing them. The flight to Constantinople was a blind, of course; he thought it much safer to ambush at home and entrap a hostage. As the practice of those times went, it was no uncommon or impertinent policy—always saving that one point of honor by which Ugo set so little store. Having taken and bound his enemy, Ugo wrote to Pico della Femandina.

But Pico sent a messenger accepting the terms, and then followed with a considerable troop to receive the hostage.

LAST SONNET OF PRINZIVALLE

And great formalities were observed; and Prinzivalle was brought out from his dungeon, pale, haughty, and darkly silent; and he and Pico embraced.

And Ugo thought his game was won. But he was doomed to disappointment, and that on that one point on which he made so little account. For in a few words, smooth, courteous in their phrasing, but deadly in their significance, Pico made it clear what men expected of him—he must defend his honor.

And Ugo saw that he had trapped himself.

He tried a last card; tried to provoke Prinzivalle then and there, while his eyes were still dim and his nerves unstrung from his dungeon. Pico interposed, but Prinzivalle, on fire with irresistible contempt and wrath, caught a sword, set on Ugo, disarmed him with a pass, and then slew him like a traitor.

“BOBBO” AND OTHER FANCIES

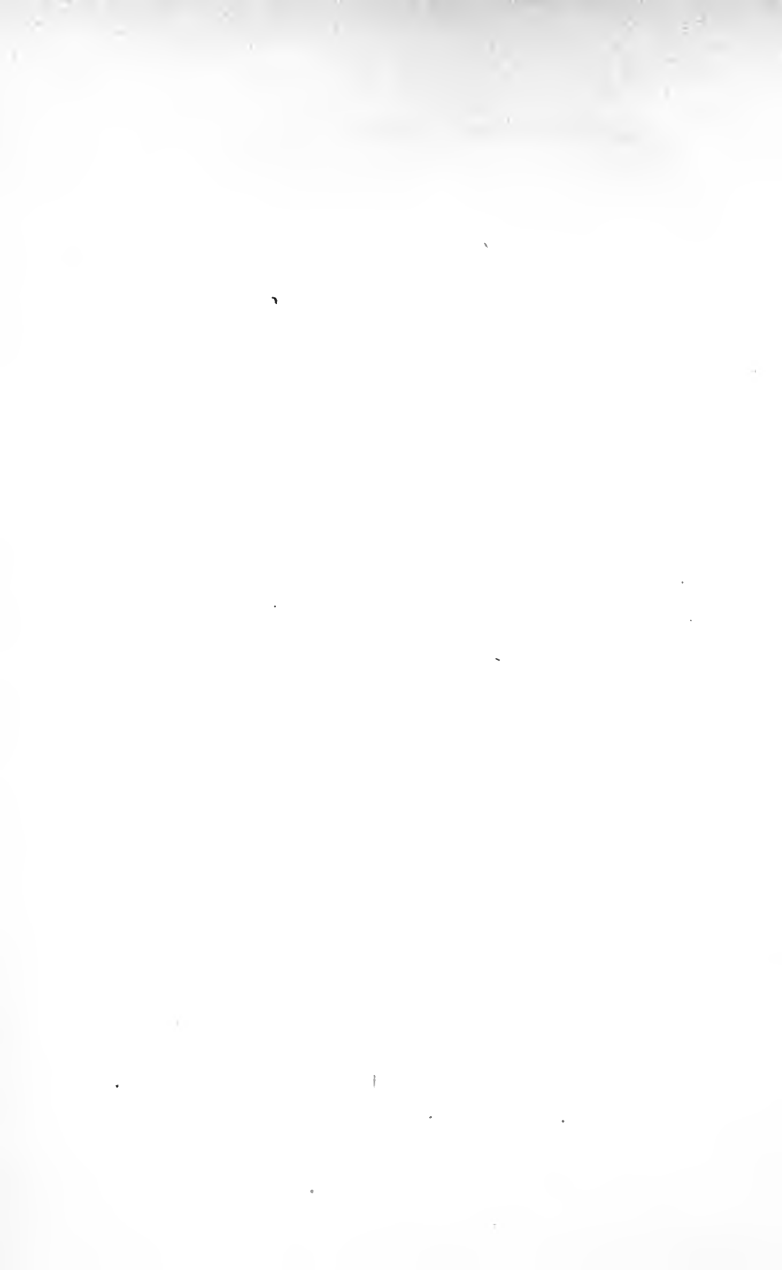
They say that Madonna Ghita watched the fight from a window, and when Ugo fell, only said, “The world is rid of a villain!”

After this Fernandina confirmed to the intendant, who rode with him, the orders Prinzivalle had received from Lorenzo concerning Madonna Ghita, and, leaving the intendant in charge, they came away.

And as Prinzivalle rode homeward his mind was full of his wife, Francesca, and it seemed to him now that the darkness of Ugo’s dungeon, and the sharp touch of Ugo’s sword upon his own, had taught him the worth of a love that had never failed him, no matter how long was his absence or how cruel his neglect. Prompt as Fernandina was to act, it was still several days before Prinzivalle’s release came; he may have lain a prisoner in Ugo’s house a week; and



“SLEW HIM LIKE A TRAITOR”



LAST SONNET OF PRINZIVALLE

during that weary se'nnight, laid up in a dark room with a wounded and aching head, and doubting whether any attempt to rescue might not result in his murder, he had plenty of time for nervous reaction. - And, indeed, as he meditated on that scene in the garden, he could hardly help perceiving that, after all, Ghita's offer to him had been voluntary and unconditional, and that no refinement upon the interdependence of spiritual aspirations could conceal the plain every-day fact that as soon as he took her at her word she withdrew it. Whether or no her pride was properly hurt might be a question ; but he had a right to hurt her pride, if he did it in good faith. Look at it how he might, he saw his idol totter, and thought with bitterness of the way he had been treated. And when he began to draw contrasts, what did he see? On the one hand his idol, Ghita ;

“BOBBO” AND OTHER FANCIES

on the other, his wife, Francesca ; on the one, danger, self-abasement, neglect of home ; on the other, quiet, ease, repose ; on the one, passion, heart-burning, servitude, and disappointment ; on the other, affection, duty, and obedience ; on the one, sonnets ; on the other, the domestic hearth. A few hours' solitary meditation upon the difference between the two pictures must have brought him very easily to the resolution which was throbbing in his head by the time Ferdinanda's coming relieved him, and in which his dramatic, fatal, and inevitable meeting with Ugo only strengthened him.

For home he went at once to Francesca. And she flew into his arms, of course, and pressed him to her heart, and laughed and wept over him, and parted his hair with anxious fingers to assure herself that his wound was heal-

LAST SONNET OF PRINZIVALLE

ed, and felt his cloak to see if his dungeon had done it harm, and tried to tell him in a breath how she hated Ugo, and how nearly she had died with fear that her husband would never be returned to her alive, and how dreadful had been her anxiety during that terrible week of suspense, when nothing, not even the pettiest concerns of the household, would go right, and when she must have utterly broken down but for the kindness of the Fernandinas, and how little Beatrice had learnt to clap hands for Uncle Pico, and how the reports from the vineyards were already better, and how she had such a good dinner for him. Ah, did not Prinzivalle feel repentant then, and choke, and catch her to his heart once more, and call her his own true, loving, long-suffering wife, from whom nothing should ever part him again? I warrant you!

“BOBBO” AND OTHER FANCIES

After dinner, when they were sitting in the twilight hand in hand, her head on his shoulder and his arm about her waist, and something of a silence had fallen between them—they had talked it over now, and we may be sure that without exactly naming Ghita, Prinzivalle had given his wife to understand that he was cured for good and all of his poetic follies, and was heartily glad that he had returned to his senses—all at once he said :

“ Oh, by-the-way, darling, I wish you would do me a favor.”

“ Anything, dearest ; what is it ?

“ I see you are wearing those dreadful feather trimmings. Soul of mine, won't you please leave them off, for my sake ?”

“ Prinzivalle !”

“ Oh yes, I am quite in earnest, cara. Of course I know you are but following the fashion, thoughtlessly, as all you

LAST SONNET OF PRINZIVALLE

women do. But it is such a cruel fashion, and so bootless. If you will but stop to think, you will see that in ten years' time we shall not have a song-bird left in all Italy."

His wife tore her hands away from his and sat upright and aloof from him, her cheeks burning. "Shame on you!" she cried. "What have I done to deserve this, Messer Prinzivalle di Cembino?"

"Good heavens!" said Prinzivalle. "My dear—"

"Do not speak to me!" she exclaimed, her breast heaving and her voice quivering with an unborn sob.

"But, Francesca!"

"Have I not been a fond wife to you? Oh, pitying saints, what have I not endured? And I have been patient—and loving—and forbearing—and kind—and I have only thought of what

“BOBBO” AND OTHER FANCIES

would please you—as a wife ought—and I have never once complained—and now—now—when I have been nearly dead with fear—and you have been wounded and in prison—and Ugo might have killed you just as easily as not—and I thought you had come back to me and that I was to have you always to myself, Prinzivalle—the first thing you do is to scold me when I try to make myself p-p-p-pretty for you!” And the poor child broke down and cried.

Prinzivalle essayed to console her. She struggled mutely with him for a moment; then, freeing herself with a sudden wrench, she rose.

“Go!” she cried. “Go bid Ghita degli Carrecci plume or unplume herself for you! She knows better than I what will please you.” And she rushed from the room.

After this Prinzivalle wrote his sonnet.



“ AND THE POOR CHILD BROKE DOWN AND CRIED ”



RATU TANITO'S WOOING

RATU TANITO'S WOOING

THE STORY OF THE MAIDEN EKESA
AND OF THE THREE TESTS OF
KING KATUBUA

RATU TANITO, son of the great King Tui Katubua, dwelt in Viti Levu, which some call Fiji. He was in stature like to the tree mbaka, and a light shone in his young eyes, so that his presence could be known at night. His canoe sped with the wind; his dancing in the war-dance brought forth a great shout from the people; his arm broke apart the strongest breakers; and men called him "The King's Arrow."

Now when the meke was ended that

“BOBBO” AND OTHER FANCIES

they had danced on the eighteenth birthday of Ratu Tanito, Katubua called his son to him, and said:

“My son, shall my line end with you?”

Ratu Tanito answered: “Not so, my father, for I will marry.”

Then the king said: “Ratu Tanito, choose a wife, observing these three requirements: First, that she be young; second, that she be strong; and, third, that she be obedient.”

“My father,” replied the young man, “is it not also a requirement that she be beautiful?”

The king answered: “Obedience is beauty.”

“Tui Viti,” said Ratu Tanito, “I have chosen a wife. She is young, for she was born on the day I first stood erect. She is strong, for she can abide the grasp of my hand without flinching. She is obe-

RATU TANITO'S WOOING

dient, for she has honored her parents. And she is beautiful as the day and lovely as the night. When I see her my heart is as a basin in which the springs surge hotly up and fall back in tumult."

"Who is the maiden?" said the king.

"Her name is Ekesa," the youth replied. "She dwells in Vanua Levu, and is the daughter of Savenaka, its king."

"Have you spoken to her of love?" the king asked.

"No," said Ratu Tanito.

"Go and speak with her concerning her parents," said the king.

Tui Katubua having thus commanded, Ratu Tanito departed by night in his canoe to Vanua Levu. And on a day he returned, and his brow was clear; and he came before the king, and said: "Tui Viti, I have performed your com-

“BOBBO” AND OTHER FANCIES

mands, and have spoken with the maiden Ekesa concerning her parents.”

The king received the words of Ratu Tanito, and, looking on his son, said: “Abide now with me, and at the end of seven days go again to the maiden, and speak with her concerning war and combats with the shark.” And Ratu Tanito did as he was commanded, and returned with a clear brow, and said: “My father, I have done according to your commands.”

And again the king commanded him to abide for seven days, and, returning to the maiden, to speak with her concerning the gods. And it was done as he commanded.

Then said Tui Katubua, “Go now, my son, and speak with the maiden concerning the government of men.” And Ratu Tanito departed, and came to Vanua Levu.

RATU TANITO'S WOOING

But when he returned thence his brow was clouded and his eyes were angry, and as he reached his father's presence he stepped with a firm step. "So now, my son," said the king, "your canoe has met with a mischance and has been dashed against a rock."

"Not so," the young man replied; "my canoe is safe, O father."

"I grieve, O my son," said the father, "that your safe departure has been opposed by the King of Vanua Levu, and that he has sought to make you a prisoner, for our vengeance will fall heavily upon his people."

"Savenaka, King of Vanua Levu, has nowise impeded my departure from his island," said the youth, "nor has he known of my presence there."

"And yet anger sits above your eyes," said the old king.

Then Ratu Tanito composed his feat-

"BOBBO" AND OTHER FANCIES

ures, and said to his father: "Forget, my father, that I have given way to anger because of a trifle. Ekesa, the maiden of whom I spoke, has said a foolish thing, and, recollecting it, my spirit was disturbed."

"And what said the maiden?"

"Truly, she is of opinion that women are of equal spirit and understanding with men, and should divide the government of human affairs with them. I think such were her words, but of a verity I heard not certainly, being much provoked, and having driven my foot against a root as we walked."

"Then you have quarrelled with the maiden?" said Tui Katubua.

"No," said Ratu Tanito, "I am not a woman. I forebore to answer her, and after she had spoken for a time, and had sworn she would marry no man who held himself her superior, I left her."

RATU TANITO'S WOOING

Then said Tui Katubua: "Go now, my son, and take war canoes, and fetch Ekesa before me!"

"The king commands," said Ratu Tanito. "But, father, I no longer wish to marry the girl; and the gods forbid that she should come to harm at my hands!"

"No harm shall come to her," said Katubua. "Do you as I command."

Accordingly, Ratu Tanito took war canoes and went to Vanua Levu and bore away Ekesa by force. And, returning to Viti Levu, he brought her before his father, who sat in state, surrounded by his chiefs and priests. And seeing this array about her, as though to judge her, Ekesa's eye flashed, and she looked defiantly at King Katubua. "Mighty monarch," she cried, "do not fear me; do not surround yourself with

“BOBBO ” AND OTHER FANCIES

your chiefs. I mean you no harm, and, indeed, have come here against my will, being brought a prisoner by this youth, one of your people. Set me free, and chastise him, and my father Savenaka will thank you and be your brother.”

“It is my son, Ratu Tanito, who brings you here,” said Katubua.

“Are you Ratu Tanito?” cried the princess, turning to the young man. And she exclaimed, with double force: “Then you are the greater traitor!”

“Maiden,” said King Katubua, “be assured. No harm shall befall you. Yet it has come to our ears that in Vanua Levu the women are the equal of the men, and as this seems a strange thing to us we have desired to see it, tested, and especially to inquire whether the women of Vanua Levu are the equals of the men in Viti Levu. For that reason we have sent to bring you here.

RATU TANITO'S WOOING

And we will propose to you three tests, which if you answer rightly and justly you shall depart home in safety, and we will offer you gifts; and, moreover, you shall lead my son home with you to be your slave, as a reparation for the wrong done you. This I swear to you; and he shall compete with you in the tests."

Whereat the princess cried out.

"He is ignorant what they are to be," said the king. "'Tis a fair match. Behold, he is as much surprised as you are."

"And if—if I lose?" said Ekesa.

"You shall marry him," said the king.

Then the king said: "Princess, are you ready for the first test?"

"But," said Ekesa, "I have not yet accepted your conditions."

"Ratu Tanito," said the king, "behold your wife."

"Nay!" cried the princess, "I am in

“BOBBO” AND OTHER FANCIES

your power. Propose to me your tests, and let your son prepare for a life of slavery.”

Katubua thereupon caused two turtle's eggs to be laid before the princess, and said: “Maiden, of these two eggs which will bring forth a male turtle and which a female? This is the first test that we propose to you.”

At this the princess crossed her arms upon her breast and laughed scornfully. “This is a test of folly, not of wisdom,” she said. “Not all the men in the world could declare of which of these two eggs should be born a male turtle and which a female.”

But Ratu Tanito stepped forward quickly, and took the eggs into his hand and crushed them. “Of neither,” he said.

Then Katubua said: “Maiden, though

RATU TANITO'S WOOING

in truth the question seemed idle, yet the youth is right, for a man must know when to act."

Next there were brought forth two bowls, each covered with a mat of woven grass. And Katubua said: "This is the second test. Of these two bowls choose that which is full of water."

Ekesa trembled, but quickly stretched out her hand and laid it on the nearest bowl, saying: "This is it."

"Choose you, now," said the king to Ratu Tanito.

But Ratu Tanito crossed his arms upon his breast and said: "Not so; for who shall say that both bowls are not empty?"

Then the king drew away the mats of woven grass, and both bowls were empty. "Maiden," said Katubua, "the youth is right, for a man should know when to speak."

“BOBBO” AND OTHER FANCIES

Then Ekesa bit her lip, and said,
“You juggle with me.”

“Yet,” said Katubua, “the youth has detected our jugglery. But here is the third test, and perhaps you will still win him for a slave. Which loves a child better — his father, or she who bore him?”

Ekesa’s eyes flashed, and she drew herself up. “Of a truth, she who bore him,” she cried.

Ratu Tanito turned and looked upon the girl, and slowly there came into his flashing eyes a tender light, but he did not speak.

At this Ekesa called to the king:
“Tui Viti, he does not speak!”

“And he is right,” said the king.
“For a man should know when to be silent.”

Then Ekesa stamped her foot, and cried aloud, in bitterness: “It was a

RATU TANITO'S WOOING

trap! You have warned him what answers he should make, and have plotted between you to shame me! Shame rather on you, Tui Katubua!"

Ratu Tanito strode to her side and caught her by the wrist and said: "Go back to your people! I will none of you. You have dishonored my father. Go back to your people! Make a way there for the princess!" he shouted to the crowd. "Make a canoe ready, and set her on the shores of Vanua Levu."

But Ekesa's eyes fell, and she did not move; only stood in her place trembling.

Then Katubua said: "Ekesa, my daughter, the philosopher Raveniza has asked: 'When should a woman disobey her husband?' "

And Ekesa lifted her tearful eyes and answered: "Never, O my father, save when he bids her leave him!"

“BOBBO” AND OTHER FANCIES

And of the union of Ekesa and of Ratu Tanito was born the great King Ratu Cakau, whom men called the Seat of Justice, and also Vunivalu, the Root of War.

OLD AND NEW



OLD AND NEW

"UPON my word," said Eugenia, suddenly flushing up, "I should like to know what you know about it."

"Eugenia," I cried, in surprise, "you don't mean to tell me you are ranging yourself on the side of the modern woman?"

"I hope I belong to my century," said Eugenia.

At this I laughed. It wasn't an unpleasant laugh; it was as glad and cheerful a laugh as any woman who doesn't insist on humming-birds need ask. It was a healthy masculine laugh.

"Why, my dear," I said, "I fell in love

“BOBBO” AND OTHER FANCIES

with you because you were such a typical old-fashioned girl.”

Upon this Eugenia trained herself upon me, so to speak, and in so doing slapped the top of her parasol into a cherry branch. She then spoke at point-blank range.

“Please repeat your original proposition,” she said, incisively.

“It was merely a statement of fact,” I replied. “I said that the modern woman didn’t appeal to me. I may add that I had some hopes that this sentiment would appeal to you.”

“Ah,” said Eugenia, “will you please look and see what has happened to my parasol?”

“I trust,” said I, disentangling it, “that you don’t intend to set up as a modern woman to punish me.”

The only answer Eugenia returned to this was to say: “I believe you expect

OLD AND NEW

me to expect you at ten to-morrow—don't you?"

This was ominous. But far above my apprehension of coming danger rose my sense of personal indignity. Of course I knew as well as you do that the modern woman was only a stalking-horse—that I might have lauded her to the skies, and Eugenia would have been just as much offended—and that my real crime, whatever it was, was something entirely different. There are times, however, when the contemplation of the fact that the feminine system of justice is neither retributive nor remedial becomes irritating. I know nothing more demoralizing than to be given a perfectly irrelevant punishment for an absolutely indefinite offence. For the moment I felt a rebellious inclination to declare for the modern woman and all her works, provided only that business intercourse

"BOBBO" AND OTHER FANCIES

should be one of them. But I said nothing.

The next morning at breakfast I received a note from Eugenia. It was couched in the sweetest possible terms, and gave me to understand that the affliction of a blinding headache made it impossible for her to go rowing with me. At eleven, accordingly, I saw her driving down Main Street, radiant, with Philippus Foster.

"Come," I said to myself, "things are not so bad as they seem, after all! Now I see my way to an explanation."

So I remonstrated with Eugenia, and Eugenia opened her eyes very wide and said, "But you must be mistaken. I was in the house all day with a headache."

I gasped. "I am to disbelieve my eyes!" I cried.

"Certainly, when I tell you to!" And Eugenia stamped her foot and frowned.

OLD AND NEW

When it is very clear I can see the sun. "I obey," I said. Upon which Eugenia smiled so charmingly that (I beg your pardon, but the fact is necessary to my narrative) I became bolder than I ever had before, and to my utter surprise I found the atmosphere so benign that I forgot about the explanation.

That evening, at the Kebo Valley Club, Eugenia treated me as if I were non-existent, and Philippus Foster as if he were the central planet of the universe.

So I said to myself, "If this is a game, let us see if I cannot draw cards." And I amused myself after the usual fashion of retaliators.

The next day I received a note from Eugenia, this time plaintive, asking why I neglected her so cruelly.

The state of bewildered indignation into which this threw me was not light-

“BOBBO” AND OTHER FANCIES

ened by the sudden consciousness that I was painfully anxious for the society of the author of this outrage—that it was an imperative necessity that I should see her at once.

I found her with her hat on and a basket on her arm.

“I am going to visit the poor,” she said, with a sweet and serious look at me.

“In Bar Harbor!” was all I could gasp.

“And have we no duties in Bar Harbor?” Eugenia said, turning her eyes towards heaven.

“Yes; but where are you going to find the poor?” I cried, desperately.

“The oppressed, the untaught, the benighted Indians!” sighed Eugenia.

If you will believe me, she made me escort her to the Indian village, where she solemnly distributed jellies and med-

OLD AND NEW

icines to those immemorial frauds upon the conscience of the white man. And when this ceremony was over, and I betrayed a pardonable inclination for departure, Eugenia halted me.

"And are you going to give them nothing?" she said, reproachfully.

I had nothing to give but money.

On the way home Eugenia was pensive. At last she turned to me and said, thoughtfully, "And yet, can we ever be sure that our charity is bestowed on deserving recipients?"

"We cannot," said I, grimly. "And," I continued, "permit me to beg, Eugenia, that you will inform me once for all—"

But Eugenia interrupted me. "Both-er the old Indians!" she said. And she smiled an exquisite smile, and threw the basket into a clump of huckleberry bushes. "Now," she said, with irresist-

“BOBBO” AND OTHER FANCIES

ible self-satisfaction, “let us talk about Me.”

The next move in this comedy, the drift of which I was beginning dimly to perceive, was that Eugenia sent a copy of verses to the village paper, which printed them over her signature, and accompanied them by a flattering editorial.

They were addressed to Bald Porcupine, and began :

“Distant islet of the deep,
While I hymn thy praise,
Let me on thy rocky steep
Ever, ever gaze.”

I forbear to quote further. But having perpetrated this indignity, she inflicted on me a worse torture yet. Have you ever seen Eugenia, that woman of sense, affect the airs of a Lydia Languish? The most amusing sight in the

OLD AND NEW

world; but, oh, it was death to me! She lisped the whole twelve verses of that infamous production to Philippus Foster at dinner at the Moxons', looking out of the corner of her eye at me the while; and when he told her it was superior to Milton, by heavens! she took it seriously.

After dinner I said to her, in a hoarse undertone, "Are you aware there may be people in this world who don't understand you are joking?"

"Hush!" said Eugenia. And she brushed her hand against mine. "Take me out on the porch."

I fell. I obeyed. I was putty in her hands. The next day, if I had had any sense, I should have gone up the coast to Nova Scotia. Instead, I stayed away for twenty-four miserable hours. Then I wavered.

There was a gleam in Eugenia's eye;

"BOBBO" AND OTHER FANCIES

but she turned it out immediately, and ordered me to accompany her to market. At the provision store she floated up to the counter, and in a heavenly voice asked for a quart of mutton chops.

After the confusion occasioned by this had subsided, she said, complacently, "Now I shall go to bank."

She handed in a check to the cashier, who asked her to endorse it.

"Why, isn't it all right?"

The cashier explained.

"But it says, Pay to me," said Eugenia, "and I think it is very strange. We have been coming to Bar Harbor for years, and my father will be very annoyed—really, you know, when one has grown up here—and it is only for ten dollars."

I was as red as a beet, but Eugenia looked so bewitching that the cashier, in huge delight at being treated so con-

OLD AND NEW

fidentially, prolonged his explanations until even the little wretch herself grew tired, and contented herself with endorsing the check on the wrong end. Then she turned to go ; shaking and in deadly fear I accompanied her. Suddenly she gave a scream : "A mouse !" she cried. "There ! there !"

With a bound I leaped forward and planted my foot firmly on the empty board.

"Where is it?" cried the bystanders, hurrying up.

I kicked the imaginary corpse under the counter, and, leaving the gaping crowd to search for it, hurried Eugenia away.

"Eugenia," I said, sternly, "it is time for this masquerade to end."

"I think I have had my fun out of it," she said, laughing most abominably.

"I admit," said I, politely, "that you

"BOBBO" AND OTHER FANCIES

have proved that the modern woman is easier to get along with."

"Exactly," she said.

"But," I continued, "you have also proved that the old-fashioned woman is infinitely more intoxicating."

"Precisely," said Eugenia.

"Well, then," said I, triumphant, "will you kindly inform me what you did mean to prove?"

"I meant," said Eugenia, dimpling, "to show you how ignorant you were."

Since then I have taken what I could get and been thankful.

VERSES



A VALENTINE TO A CHILD

SOME day, my dear Miss, I shall call
for you
In a light, light balloon just made for
two,
And drawn by three wild swans in a
row,
With golden harness on for show;
And the car will be painted a shimmering green
With silver fancies all in between;
There will be advertisements of our
ascension,
And glittering banners to call attention.
And just as the clock strikes twelve,
my dear,
On the very tiptop of the roof you'll
appear,

“BOBBO” AND OTHER FANCIES

And stand in a flowery carpeted place,
Amidst the applause of the populace;
And there'll be complimentary bands
to play

As you step in the car and ride away.
And I shall be dressed like a fairy prince;
I shall smell of bergamot, musk, and
quince,

With a scarlet cap and silken hose,
And a talisman hidden where no one
knows ;

I will rise with a smile and make you
a bow,

Then you'll courtesy as deep as the
car will allow ;

Then you'll shake out your skirts and
sit down beside me

On a jewelled seat, which will be sup-
plied me.

You will drive with a pair of silken
reins,

And not appear to be taking pains ;

VERSES

And the swans will make three dips
and a bend,
And then fly straight unto the end.

PYTHIAS ON DAMON'S BETROTHAL- RING

AH! magic circle, here we see
The symbol of eternity,
With no beginning and no end—
An idle symbol, O my friend!
Eternity begins to-day,
And ended only yesterday.
For our eternities are double,
The birth of joy, the end of trouble,
And each new day shall only add
Eternities both new and glad.

“BOBBO” AND OTHER FANCIES

“OPEN, O GATES OF HORN!”

OPEN, O gates of Horn! and let the
dream,

Timid as he who begs its aid,
Slip through, nor still delay its flight
To that unwakened maid
For whom I long; oh, give it chance
to try

If to her pillowed cheek it can
A tinge faint-flushing as the glimmer
bring

Of dawns Elysian,
As in her ear it whispers low the tale
Of how I love, and how I wake,
And how my heart will, till I see her
face,

No comfort take;
Or in her breath, soft watchman with
the night,

If unsuspected it may stir

VERSES

A hastening sigh, unto her waking
dreams

To be my minister,
As with suggestions tender it beguiles
Her heart that now unguarded lies,
And weaves reproaching piteous im-
ages

Into her closed eyes.
Open, O gates of Horn! and if it fail,
If she untroubled wake at morn,
Silent it will steal back among the
mists,
Like me forlorn.

THE USUAL REACTION

CAN this be I who on the stool
Of silent meditation sit,
In all the club the only fool
Who frank confesses it?

“BOBBO” AND OTHER FANCIES

And John, who quickly at my hand
The solitary beaker sets,
Does he my silence understand?—
I’ve paid my debts.

Unheeded pass the gay and free
Who still bloom sportive on the
stem—

I wonder is the change in me,
Or can it be in them?
No longer in the window I
Among them book my little bets;
They look on me with pitying eye—
I’ve paid my debts.

Is Raceland scratched? Is Tenny
lame?

In faith, I do not care a rap;
Alone I stand outside the game,
A melancholy chap.
Here fall together aces four,
There spin the ravishing roulettes;

VERSES

Alas! for me they spin no more—
I've paid my debts.

From her barouche on Union Square
A killing glance Carlotta threw,
And I could only dumbly stare,
Carlotta, dear, at you.
The light which shed such radiant
tints,
And shone round all you sweet *pou-*
lettes,
Seems somehow to have vanished
since
I've paid my debts.

There was a day, there was a night,
They blended, and you reigned o'er
both;
And bankrupt I could follow, light
Of heart and nothing loath.
To-day is only one day long,
To-day I send you my regrets,

"BOBBO" AND OTHER FANCIES

To-day has one depressing song—
I've paid my debts.

O too insatiate moral law,
Why thus upon my system act?
Who swears to live without a flaw,
Need he do so in fact?
Yet from the rosy-fingered band
Not one appeal my fancy whets;
I can't forget I'm married, and
I've paid my debts.

—From *Puck*

THALIA'S VIEW OF IT

(WITH HOMAGE TO MR. ALDRICH)

A MIDDLE-AGED lyrical Poet is supposed to have taken final leave of the Muse of Comedy. He has put on his hat and gloves, and is walking slowly away down a winding road without

VERSES

looking back. She gazes wistfully after him as she speaks:

“When were December and May
Known to be happy together?”
That is what all of them say,
Each at the end of his tether.

Yes! when too heavy the dew
Drops from the firs on the mountain,
Or the rhyme fails to fall true,
When noon laughs low by the fountain.

When once the lark pipes too long,
Or the lute too loud is thrumming,
Then things begin to grow wrong,
The poor Muse knows what is coming!

Fearful his kisses grow tame,
Fearful his verses grow tamer;

“BOBBO” AND OTHER FANCIES

Each at the height of his fame
Wakes Muse and Mistress to shame
her.

Ere she has time to protest
The pine shakes lonely above her,
And he is gone with the rest—
Gone to grow old is her lover.

Since it is better to part,
I take his rose for my laurel;
Treasure his face in my heart—
'Tis not with him that I quarrel.

O *moi!* why cannot my kiss
Bestow the guerdon denied me?
All the rhymes gladly I'd miss
To keep my lovers beside me.

Dear hearts! their verses will live—
That was what they made their
prayer for;

VERSES

That is the guerdon I give—
But it is love that I care for!

Time, as he passes by me,
Cheats them because they are human;
man;

Where is the one who will see
That I am only a woman?

Where is the poet who will
Trust that I never can doubt him?
Nor can Death conquer him till
I take my arms from about him.

Farewell! no more to the grove
Your step turns willing and certain.
Farewell! no longer we rove
Where night draws her purple curtain.

Farewell! but— Hist! did you hear,
Clio, the doves in a flurry?

"BOBBO" AND OTHER FANCIES

A stranger—young—fair—draws near!
Run, leave me, you goose!—hide!—
hurry!

—From the *Times*

A RECEIPT FOR AN IDYL

WHEN bosky June is at her height,
And various blossoms blooming,
Take a thick grove with wild flowers
dight
Adorned by beetles booming.
Induce therein a man and maid—
He carrying shawls and wrappings;
And 'neath some tree's convenient
shade,
Let him outspread the trappings.

She should be pretty, sweet and fond,
And given much to pursing
Of lips o'er little thoughts she's con-
ned,
And quaint conceits she's nursing,

VERSES

He should be handsome, *débonnaire*,
A trifle shrewd and witty ;
Of course *aux petits soins* with the fair—
No rustic, but from city.

There let them talk: throw in a spice
Of conscious affectation ;
Flavor with flirting, speeches nice,
And bashful hesitation.
A little glove for her to twirl,
A rose for her to finger—
He should her parasol unfurl,
And o'er her bangles linger.

A bird is needed overhead,
A streamlet near them flowing ;
Her cheek might be a trifle red,
His smile amused be growing.
Then, when at dusk the careless breeze
Fails with the light diminished,
As home they loiter through the trees
You'll find your idyl finished.

"BOBBO" AND OTHER FANCIES

A SEQUITUR TO AN IDYL

A LITTLE headache in the morn,
A little pensive yearning,
As curl and blister slow the torn
And crumpled leaves she's burning;
She thinks she'll ne'er get over it—
Was he the *only* sinner?—
While through her head, grief-stricken,
flit
Consoling thoughts of dinner.

He puffs a pipe his wrath t' assuage,
His hands deep thrust in pockets;
He calls her jilt, and thinks with rage
On wasted flowers and lockets.
Thus dolefully the morning goes
For this poor frowning smoker;
A friend drops in to hear his woes—
They take a hand at poker.

VERSES

O summer days! O summer gales!
Your whispers are deceiving!
The vows we swear by ocean's sails
Are rarely worth believing;
The dryads in their leafy haunts
Hear oaths that never bind us;
And when we go on summer jaunts
We leave our hearts behind us.

DOUBT

THE narrow teachings of a formal
school
Impugn my better self with carnal ill,
Dictating me unable to fulfil
A perfect nature but by stubborn rule.
My toil of reformation, then, must draw
To its conclusion on a beaten track—
But who can pause in labor, and look
back
And joy to miss all blemishes he saw?

"BOBBO" AND OTHER FANCIES

How can my soul eternity contain,
Perverted by this tarnishment of
earth?
And how can it possess a patent
worth,
By mortal touch so soon debased
again?
Show me my soul, O Lord! that I
may see
If truly it is fit to live with thee.

A REPUBLIC

DESPAIRING strength has left her si-
lent limbs,
To gather reckless in those straining
eyes,
That search the dimpled ocean and
the skies,
Where autumn brightness in the azure
swims.

VERSES

Ask *her* to gladden with each loosened
sail

That swells on her hereditary seas?

Ask *her* to sing with every harvest
breeze

That blows fair increase to her peo-
ple's pale,

While, fat and gluttonous, the shiny
Beast,

The loathly thing, Corruption, stark
and fell,

Rolling entanglement from nether
hell

Through easy deeps, will on *her* make
its feast?

O Freedom chained! down dropping
to the wave,

No Perseus swings a Gorgon's head
to save!

“BOBBO” AND OTHER FANCIES

NEW YEAR'S DAY

THE old year goes. Could we delay it,
And respite of our future borrow,
With what affection would *I* stay it,
And linger with you here,
For Sorrow's sake, my dear,
For very sorrow!

Alas! 'tis not the year that's from us
flying—

'Tis we that move!

And must we leave old times a-dying,
While we to follow Time are trying?
Shall we new hearts new-mould for
newer sighing?
Shall we new pleasures with new life
be buying?

No! let our hearts stay here,
For friendship's sake, my dear,
For very love!

VERSES

SONG. (*From "CHARLEMAGNE"*)

Emma—(on the balcony):

YOUNG Time sprang up when the
world was made—

Somewhere he had been waiting—
And he looked with delight on the
world displayed,

Its joys anticipating.
He must outlive Life, for he held
Life's measure—

He thought that he'd outlast Life for
pleasure—

So at once he began, on Life's first
plan

For the entertainment of beast and
man,

By falling in love, as his first sands
ran,

With the two nymphs, Haste and
Leisure.

“BOBBO” AND OTHER FANCIES

For they had been sporting on his
track,

While Leisure coy behind him
Crept slyly along, brisk Haste looked
back,

Appearing surprised to find him
So slow when his chances were just
beginning,

As if his hairs were already thinning ;
But Leisure's smile had a pleasing
wile,

So he slackened his pace for about
a mile,

Then tarried for a little while,
Bent on her kisses winning.

But Leisure thought that Time would
keep,

So she did as Nature told her:
She improved the occasion by going
to sleep,

While Haste began to scold her.

VERSES

But Time thought otherwise—back he
 stepped then,
But the nearer he drew the deeper she
 slept then;
So somewhat hurt, he called her a
 flirt,
He left the nymph with blessing
 curt,
And seeing that Haste looked gay
 and pert
To gain her side he leaped then.

But Haste responded to Nature's call,
 And as soon as Time had started,
While Leisure rose to gain lost Time
 Like a meteor Haste departed.
But Time was provoked at her rude
 transition—
It somewhat soured his disposition—
 So till this day, as people say,
He journeys straight the self-same
 gait;

“BOBBO” AND OTHER FANCIES

While Haste is dancing on before,
Still too impatient to wait, as of
yore,
Leisure can never catch up to him
more,
Yet goes on trying to mend her con-
dition.

SONG. (*From* “CHARLEMAGNE”)

Eginhard:

ONCE a maiden wandered where the
rushes thicken ;
Young she was, and sweet she was,
and coy was she,
Calling Father Time his lagging steps
to quicken,
So that she the sooner might her
lover see.
And it's hasten, Father Time !
And it's hurry, Father Time !

VERSES

Time, you're always in the wrong, I'm
sure ;
You make us lovers wait too long, I'm
sure.

Emma :

Once a youth stood watching autumn
leaves a-falling ;
Slow he was, and sad he was, and
fond was he ;
He held a little hand in his the while
he kept a-calling
To Father Time, who strode along
relentlessly.
And it's tarry, Father Time !
And it's slower, Father Time !
Time, you're always in the wrong, I'm
sure ;
You never give us lovers long, I'm
sure.

“BOBBO” AND OTHER FANCIES

SONG. (*From* “CHARLEMAGNE”)

Eginhard—(under the window):

To name the half of all that stirs
 Beneath the ocean's changing tide,
To guess what strange created things
 Within the earth do bide,
Such marvels Heaven alone can trace,
Inspired strains alone embrace.

So love has depths that none declare,
 And breadths that mortals none
 have spanned,
For it is deeper than the sea
 And wider than the land.
Therefore, what marvels in it move
I cannot tell when I name Love.

VERSES

SERENADE. (*From* "CHARLEMAGNE")

I WILL not ask the wintry gale
In numbers to be sighing,
Soft as if April to my tale
A burden were replying ;
I will not ask that it shall take
To where my love lies sleeping,
This, this my song, until she wake
Its echo for her keeping.

I will not ask a dream to steal
Beneath those eyelids tender,
And to the sleeper so reveal
The message I would send her ;
Messenger dream nor gale shall be
Swift to her pillow freighting—
Because I know too well that she
Wakes, and is yonder waiting !

"BOBBO" AND OTHER FANCIES

DIANA OF THE KNICKERBOCKERS

I

MOST mannish goddess, tailor-made
and straight,
Your classic limbs unclassically skirt-
ed,
With upright head, clear eye, and fear-
less gait,
A bunch of roses at your breast in-
serted,

II

You pace the city: from the groves
to you
Shepherds, pipes, pastorals, poets
have seceded—
Like Liberty herself, you're *parvenue*,
Mistress, which means, like her, you
have succeeded.

VERSES

III

Leaving what hills, why love you here
the flags?

Whence runs your blood, so cold,
and yet so splendid?

A huntress, you—to dog-carts and to
drags,

Say, have the hamadryads all de-
scended?

IV

The anxious fawn from no cool spring
is fled

That fears your arrows in the chase
unerring,

When the red sun burns all the sky
to red—

I doubt if quite so early you are
stirring.

"BOBBO" AND OTHER FANCIES

V

And yet the spring flows cold from
faucets, too,
White gleam your shoulders out of
tulle and laces,
As through the branches they should
gleam did you
Some day return to woods again,
and chases.

VI

I half expect it; but you'll longer
stay
To ride, and fence, and play at tennis,
won't you?
Themselves the shepherds rise at break
of day
No more—and you prefer the club-
men, don't you?

VERSES

VII

Yes, stay. Far be the quiver from
your back—

Still wear dressed boots instead of
thongs and sandals,

Still chaff with actors, call Actæon
“Jack,”

And laugh—I wish you wouldn’t,
though—at scandals.

VIII

Kind you may be, to whom the world
is kind,

And generous, who never lacked a
penny;

I leave that score to any you may
find

Apologist—for you—the fools are
many.

"BOBBO" AND OTHER FANCIES

IX

I don't apologize: the world must move.

I hate the things which most delightful strike you;

My soul revolts at what you most approve,

But, O Diana! oh, how much I like you!

—From *Puck*.

AFTER CHURCH

UNDER lattice, arch, and gable,
Up and down the Sunday street,
When the congregations meet,
Much I love to follow Mabel.

Much I love the sunlight glancing
On the ranks of new top-hats,
And upon a figure that's
Close in front of me advancing.

VERSES

From the columns of St. Peter,
From the arches of St. Mark,
One would say each city spark
Had run headlong here to meet her.

Can you count how many roses
She has fastened in her dress?
Of the beaux that round her press
You may count as many noses.

Each succeeding congregation's
Way she does in turn obstruct;
There should be a viaduct
Over Mabel on occasions!

All the new top-hats are doffing,
All the bonnets toss again;
They are always tossing when
Mabel's sighted in the offing.

"BOBBO" AND OTHER FANCIES

Yes, an easy first she still is,
Still the girl to make a stir,
Much I love to follow her—
And to walk, myself, with Phyllis.

REMEMBERED

I WROTE you rhymes in idle times,
In idle times you read them;
In sober times you now forget
The rhymes—the hand that sped
them.

Sober, alas! but they will pass—
No day outlives the dial.
The jocund years go quick? Well, so,
So go the years of trial.

And then at last, when these are past,
Come years of rest from sighing,

VERSES

From laughing too—and then the
rhymes,
Which now forgot are lying,

Will still beguile a fleeting smile
For girlhood lapsed and rusty—
A quickening thought of younger
days,
Ere younger hopes grew musty.

So romance goes beneath the rose,
Still trifles please our folly;
And still they please our wisdomed
heads,
Grown white beneath the holly.

And so life goes most like the rose:
When e'en the thorn is blunted,
Some tattered leaf still shows the
bush
Has not been always stunted.

"BOBBO" AND OTHER FANCIES

RONDEAU À LA MODE

Lui :

LOVE is enough!

Elle :

We first must buy
Or build a house with ceilings high,
With tapestries on brazen hooks,
Stained window-panes and cushioned
nooks—
Our china must make artists sigh.
Wax candles' light shall soothe the
eye,
Fitted in gleaming sconces high;—
Brass mirrors shall reflect our looks.

Lui :

Love is enough!

VERSES

Elle :

Venetian glasses twisted wry
We'll have, and rugs of Moorish dye,
And vellum bindings on our books—
And oh! we'll have Parisian cooks—
To us no Irish need apply.

Lui (feebly):

Love is enough!

TO MRS. ———

Upon the Feast of St. Valentine

THE day appears, with sudden sighs
And telltale looks attended,
When yielding hearts are taken prize
That once were well defended.

The day appears, but you no more
Can dread its pleasant dangers;

“BOBBO” AND OTHER FANCIES

Although you knew him well before,
The saint and you are strangers.

No longer can he charge the breeze
With whispers to detain you—
He lost you from his devotees
When first he 'gan to gain you.

The trees may bud, but not for you
He starts the sap a-flowing;
Not your contentment to undo
He sets the west a-glowing.

You need not fear his tender wile
That other breasts engages;
He rubbed your name out quite a while
Ago upon his pages.

But when he passes you to-day,
Despite your dereliction,
He'll pause upon his busy way
To breathe a benediction.

VERSES

LAUDO MANENTEM

I PRAISED her while she stayed—she
 had my heart ;
I gave it her with all good-will.
Now she has left me, facile to depart—
I praise her still.

VARIUM ET MUTABILE

SINCE Eve's departure from Paradise
 Lost,
 Tho' fiery swords surround it,
The time of your sex has been given
 up
 To making men think they've found
 it.

Such honest atonement is only just—
 But why, I beg of you, ladies,

"BOBBO" AND OTHER FANCIES

As soon as you've soothed us with
that belief,
Do you give us foreknowledge of Ha-
des?

THE LAMENT OF THE IRISH CRICKETER

(At Philadelphia, 1880)

SURE the Philadelphy cricketers are
handy wid the ball—
Ye know how the Quakers' bowling
played the divil wid us all!
An' they batted us thremenjus; we
were in a purty mess—
Yet I'd be whisperin' to ye the rale
truth of our distress.

Ah, bedad! it was unmanly. To be
certain of our stumps,
They hatched schemes—I can't for-
give um, though they thrated us
like thrumps.

VERSES

Faix, they fetched a crowd of colleens,
brown and fair and tall and short,
All as charming as Aurora whin she
holds her rosy court.

And they ranged um round the crick-
et-field and inthrojuiced us all—
May the divil fly away wid me if I
could see a ball!

There was one swate duck in muslin,
who had hair like fine-shpun gold,
Waved her handkerchief at Colthurst,
and next minnit he was bowled.

Every man of us fell that way. There
was Trotter, first man in,
Had been blarneying a darlint till I
told him 'twas a sin,
And the fielders all were ready—"Ah!"
saysee, "jooce take the match!"
And he walked out to the wicket and
popped up an aisy catch.

“BOBBO” AND OTHER FANCIES

That's the way thim Quakers served
us—div ye think, now, it was fair
To becloud our eyes wid petticoats all
wavin' in the air?
To relax our sturdy sinews wid the
touch of gentle hands?
To confuse us till we fielded slower
nor lobsters on the sands?

'Twas a thrick, and that I'll sware to!
None the less, now, niver fear,
We'll spend all our time colloquing
with ache purty little dear,
But whin we play the Merion, mind,
that's Chewsday of this wake,
Not a gyurl gets in to watch us—Mr.
Times, you hear me shpake!

VERSES

ARCHÆOLOGY

MEN find Time's keepsakes of an age
forgot

Hid in the nooks and crannies of
the earth,

A flint, a statue in a buried grot,
And hail with reverence their second
birth.

They hear, while standing with un-
covered head,

Echoes of lives whose souls perhaps
are dead.

But we have chanced upon a won-
drous thing;

The sweetness of a life that, slighted
there,

Dreamed itself over from a bygone
spring,

An idyl fresh from Arcady the fair—

“BOBBO” AND OTHER FANCIES

Dear, from the Golden Age our love
is lent,
Its heart still young, its essence still
unspent.

“How do you think it understood our
speech?

How did it know us as we loitered
by?

Do we remind it of those two whose
reach

It fluttered from?” So questions
she; but I:

“We woke it, dear; a sleeping beauty
this,

That slept and waited for us both to
kiss.”

—From *Atlantic Monthly*, Oct., 1880.

VERSES

AMALA'S SONG. (*From* "MONTEZUMA")

LONG years ago

In Mexico

An ancestress of mine—

Amala was her name, the legend
mentions—

By yonder lake,

Whose waters break

Where now the temples shine,
Declined, one night, a deity's atten-
tions:

The god Quezalcoatl!

In vain he pressed upon her his affec-
tion;

She could not stand his coppery com-
plexion.

This to a god

Was something odd

"BOBBO" AND OTHER FANCIES

In annals Mexican,
Especially from such a dusky lady :
And for his part,
As much to heart
As if he'd been a man
He took the intimation he was shady :
The god Quezalcoatli!
Exclaiming, "I'll return a blond," he
hied him,
And jumped into a crater close beside
him.

As soon as he
Had left her, she
Of course became dismayed
That she had been so deaf to his be-
seeching ;
And though for days
To watch the place
She by the crater stayed,
He ne'er returned, and still (they say)
is bleaching :

VERSES

The god Quezalcoatl!
But he will come with golden hair re-
splendent
To claim (they say) her loveliest de-
scendant.

SONG. (*From "MONTEZUMA"*)

IN peace or war, by night or day,
The steady step of Sorrow
Is ever treading on the way
That brings with her the morrow.

And when she names her children, then,
Whate'er the path before them,
The mother of all mortal men
Stands on it, waiting for them.

Farewell, my sweetheart! Darling, since
The perils that beset me
Bring me to die, I die a prince,
And as a prince forget me.

"BOBBO" AND OTHER FANCIES

AT THE POMME DE PIN

(From "FRANÇOIS VILLON")

1. Chorus of Taverners

HERE at the Pomme de Pin,
His friends among,
Jest, ballade, and quatrain
Made he and sung.

We, whom the gallows-tree
Has waited long,
Were all the friends that he
Gained by his song.

2. Chorus of Taverners

The vine that Noah planted
Has grown up to the sky—
The grapes must be enchanted,
They hang so wondrous high!

VERSES

The thirsty world grows sadder,
So high they hang in air;
We'll climb up Jacob's ladder
And press the vintage there.

3. Song of Villon

Who in Paris streets is born
Naked 'neath the crumbling rafter,
Vagrant, needy, and forlorn,
They're his world forever after.
Ever after they shall be
Meat and drink to him, and rai-
ment,
For of life they make him free,
And they take his soul in payment.

Who in Paris streets is born
Minstrel, with the wind for mas-
ter,
He can hold a king in scorn,
While his ballads flow the faster

“BOBBO” AND OTHER FANCIES

As he sees before him move,
In their pageant never ending,
Human joy and human love,
Human passion, all transcending.

Of that pageant e'er a part,
He by turns is prince and varlet.
Red's the blood that warms his heart,
Though his sins should be as scarlet.
Nursed by them in vice and want,
These alone can ne'er deceive him,
And for all his shrift is scant,
While he lives 'tis life they give him.

Who to Paris streets returns
Minstrel, with the wind for master,
And once more their freedom earns
Is but to them bound the faster;
And his song with fire shall glow,
And his heart with love be burning,
Since the streets that bore him know
How to pardon him returning.

VERSES

BALLADE OF THE SAINT ON EARTH

(*From "FRANÇOIS VILLON"*)

I

A SAINT on earth there was long syne,
Holy, chaste, and self-denying—
On bread and water he would dine,
To prepare himself for dying.
To this fare himself applying,
He, with faculties collected,
Died at last, devoutly crying,
"How I'll dance when resurrected!"

II

But ere the judgment day could shine
All the land in sin was lying,
And from the grave, to be a sign,
He was raised, repentance crying.
Crack! his thin old legs went flying
In such gambols unexpected,

"BOBBO" AND OTHER FANCIES

All the sinners ceased from sighing—
How he danced when resurrected!

Envoi

Prince, you need not think I'm lying,
Sinful lives may be corrected—
But the saints, though sin defying,
How they'll dance when resurrected!

LES DAMES DU TEMPS JADIS

(From "FRANÇOIS VILLON")

Song

SAY in what land is Flora, she
Whom once they loved at Rome?
And Thaïs, who her twin might be,
Where makes she now her home?
Let echo say, that aye by mere
And river answering goes,
Is beauty more than mortal? Where
Are last year's snows?

VERSES

And Héloïse, the fair and wise—

Could Abélard foresee

That love and her enthralling eyes

Would bring such misery?

Where is she now? And fierce and
fair,

Where is the queen whose foes

The silent Seine closed over? Where

Are last year's snows?

Where is Queen Blanche, the lily
white,

That like a siren sung—

The duchess that of Maine was hight,

Dame Alice, sweet and young;

And Joan of Arc, in Rouen's square

Whose soul to heaven rose.

Ah, Mary, Virgin Mother, where

Are last year's snows?

"BOBBO" AND OTHER FANCIES

PILGRIM

HEAVEN is where I hope to go,
But how shall I cross the mountain?

You must climb over rock and craggy
stone,
And so you shall cross the mountain.

Heaven is where I hope to go,
But how shall I cross the forest?

You must find your way by bush and
tree,
And so you shall cross the forest:
You must climb over rock and craggy
stone,
And so you shall cross the mountain.

Heaven is where I hope to go,
But how shall I cross the river?

VERSES

You must build your boat of the wood
thereby,
And so you shall cross the river:
You must find your way by bush and
tree,
And so you shall cross the forest.

Heaven is where I hope to go,
But how shall I cross the desert?

You must fill your stoup with the
water of life,
And so you shall cross the desert:
You must build your boat of the wood
thereby,
And so you shall cross the river.

Heaven is where I hope to go,
But how shall I pass the angels?

You must do good deeds as you tread
the road,

“BOBBO” AND OTHER FANCIES

And so you shall pass the angels:
You must fill your stoup with the
 water of life,
And so you shall cross the desert.

Heaven is where I hope to go,
But how shall I find my Saviour?

You must lead by the hand a little
 child,
And so you shall find your Saviour:
You must do good deeds as you tread
 the road,
And so you shall pass the angels.

BEFORE GRADUATING

ONLY a few steps more—
 A breath, while I look back
 Upon the bending track
I've pressed in coming o'er

VERSES

The grassy fields of youth—
The light stalks straighten up,
The cōwslip lifts the cup
I scarcely brushed, in truth.

My way so soon forgot?
The dust in that highway
Which I must tread to-day
Would longer keep the spot!

Still to my mem'ry cling
Dim shadows of regret
From where each flower was set—
Alas! the idle spring!

Its harmonies divine
Cheated the cares it brought,
And unawares I thought,
These are world-cares, not mine!

"BOBBO" AND OTHER FANCIES

And now the road is near
Where ceaseless thousands tread
The footsteps of the dead
To see their own appear.

And I shall join the throng
To struggle toward the hills,
Whose lowering silence chills
The first that near along!

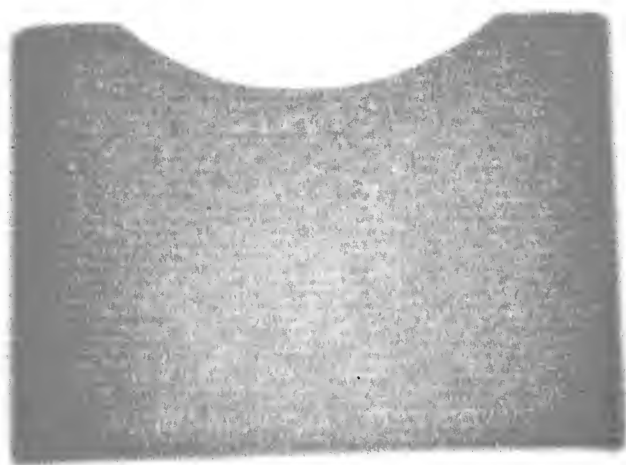
Hush—I will choke the sigh
Striving in sobs to swell!
I do not sound the knell
When I my Future try

Of all my earthly joy—
Yet—as I longer pause
Ere I fulfil the laws
That change me man from boy,

VERSES

And linger with the scene
That I must leave to-day—
Again, again I'll pray :
“ Lord, keep my memory green ! ”

THE END



"Bobbo" and other
fancies.

333
W554
b

340415

Wharton

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY



